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CINDERELLA NO MORE

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H.W. WILSON

To the memory of my wife
ADA
without whom I should have
accomplished nothing

AUTHOR'S NOTE

My book owes much to the encouragement of my friend, Richard Capell, to whom I am obliged also for criticism of the manuscript.

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Acknowledgements are made to H.M.V. for the reproduction of the photograph of Lionel Tertis and Solomon, and to the 'Sunday Times' for the photograph of Sir Thomas Beecham.

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FOREWORD

Of necessity this story is autobiographical, but its purpose is frankly propagandist. That word, today besmirched by insidious associations, used to be of worthy repute in the verbal world, but I feel that I shall not harm my cause by describing my life's efforts as those of a "propagandist for the viola."

It has been a long struggle, at times grievously discouraging, at others greatly rewarding and ever completely absorbing. Throughout I have received kindly support and help from many friends and co-believers in my cause. To some of them I make acknowledgment in the course of this book, but none has given me at all times more sincere and valuable encouragement than my friend Richard Capell, to whom I owe much in the telling of my story.

I may perhaps be forgiven for including in this foreword some account of two happenings which in chronology should form a postscript, but are so recent and in my eyes so important to the cause of the viola that they should not be so relegated. Since this book was finished early in 1952 I have undergone a serious operation and through providence, and the skill of my surgeon, my doctor, and the devoted women who nursed me in hospital, I soon made so good a recovery as to be able to pursue my art, at least for my own ears. In July,

although but a short time convalescent, I was well enough to travel to and greatly enjoy the King's Lynn Festival. While there, to my infinite joy and astonishment, I was called upon to play for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret, during morning service at Sandringham Church. It is impossible to express adequately my gratification at this royal mark of recognition of the viola and also Her Majesty's gracious and discerning interest in the design of the instrument I was using.

It was also during the King's Lynn Festival that I had the opportunity of hearing Sir John Barbirolli's beautiful transcription for orchestra of Bach's Chorale Prelude *In our Hour of Deepest Need*. This great sincere artist has since fulfilled a promise, then made, to send me a copy of the published score and has delighted me immeasurably by writing upon it the following inscription :—

"For my very dear friend Lionel Tertis who *In our Hour of Deepest Need* restored the viola to us. John."

L.T.

October, 1952.

I

My right hand uses the pen reluctantly. Throughout a long life it has been accustomed to a different implement — the fiddle-bow. Now that it has been persuaded to take up the pen it behaves like a left hand. What excuse is there for its allowing itself to be prevailed upon to venture without skill or experience into this other field of action, the art of writing? One only: it is this, that I may thereby strike one more blow, possibly my last, on behalf of the love and tyrant of my life, the viola.

Bow and fiddle! Has the mind of man created anything to compare with these? any other instruments of such elegance, of such resources, of such power of expression, of such endless possibilities, so enormously, tyrannically exacting, or so rewarding? Sometimes the scientifically-minded of our times suggest that hand-made music is a passing phenomenon; they say that the music of the future will be something utterly different, produced in a mechanical laboratory and distributed by the means the wireless has made familiar. Concert-rooms and conservatories, they say, will be superseded, and be looked upon as no less primitive than the Vikings who rowed their way from Norway to Labrador. I have no wish to live into that brave new world. It will have lost more than it will have gained. The overcoming of difficulties, the struggle with the recalcitrant

instrument, the wringing of beauty from contraptions of wood and hair, gut and metal—all this is something that makes life worth living. Music will not be the music we know when it is nothing more than a commodity obtained by turning on a tap. Signs are already about us of that state; but the music we value as the real thing has to be struggled for with all the power of the will, all possible concentration of the mind—struggled for, missed and struggled for again. The hedonists, those for whom music means a soothing noise produced by the wireless while they are playing bridge, or by the jazz-band to help out conversation during dinner at a restaurant (ugh..... restaurant music—the means, I call it, of spoiling a good dinner)—these have not the first notion of what music stands for.

My fortune, I can see, is to have lived in an age when music was at its heyday. In the England of my time the circle of the music-loving increased decade by decade. It was greater in the 1890s than in the 1880s, and greater still after the turn of the century. In mid-Victorian times we had lagged behind the Continental countries. While I grew up the mass of Englishmen were discovering music. We may be nearing the end of an epoch—the shades of a mechanised world may be closing about us—but for the time being it is still a wonderful age, an age when people are still fiddling.

My father, Alexander Tertis, was a Jewish minister of religion, and his singing at the synagogue attracted worshippers from near and far. My first intimations of music came from his singing-practice, in which I delighted. He had a fine tenor voice, and later on I realized how beauti-

fully he phrased. He was naturally musical; good music absorbed him, and to him I owe my passion for it.

I was born at West Hartlepool on December 29th, 1876. I cannot say with Thomas Hood, "I remember, I remember the house where I was born", for I left my native place for London when I was but three months old. Thirty-four years elapsed before I returned, to take part in a concert as solo violist with Melba; we arrived in a fog and left in a fog, and that is all I know of Hartlepool.

My father was born at Koudanov in the Russian province of Minsk, and arrived in England at the age of thirteen; eventually he became a naturalized Briton. My mother was Polish born and migrated to England with her father, who also became a British subject. My first memories are of the East End of London.

We lived at 8, Princelet street, Spitalfields—Spital being a corruption of "hospital"—a Victorian slum in the borough of Stepney. In adjacent Brick Lane the "poor man's market" on a Sunday morning presented a scene I yet remember, with its piles of cast-off clothing and boots and shoes spread on the ground for sale, and with the din of the bargaining crowds. Petticoat Lane, likewise near by, was a place of such intensity of squalor that I wonder I have lived to tell my tale. The one bright spot in Spitalfields was Christ Church, so tall and so calm with its lovely pale-grey stone.

Our house was big, antiquated, rambling. The basement housed the kitchen and scullery — dungeons to which the area windows admitted only a modicum of light. As a boy I attended the services

CLARA DAMROSCH MANNES

at the synagogue opposite our house, although I understood hardly a word of Hebrew, for I was taught at a London County Council school, in a street off Petticoat Lane, where no foreign language figured in the curriculum. Well I remember how hypocritical I felt myself to be, pretending to supplicate the Supreme Being in words I did not comprehend.

I did not at first face the world as a string-player. I was given piano lessons at the age of five and, possessing a certain facility, came out as a soloist when I was six at a concert at Highbury in North London. I was attired for the occasion in a velvet coat and deep white-lace collar, and vividly remember that the piece I played was a Tarantella by Stephen Heller—at a most excessive pace, to show off. I was not diligent, and my mother came to the point of locking me in the room with the piano. There I practised for many hours a day—with a story-book on the stand in place of my music.

Never did the idea of the piano's becoming my principal instrument appeal to me. From the first I felt its response to one's expressive effort to be inadequate, and I have always considered the piano a far more difficult music-making instrument than the fiddle. Pianists abound; but how few and far between are those who are able to hold us by their expressive playing! All through my study of the piano my ambition was to become a violinist. Soon after I was twelve years of age I realized that to achieve this it would be necessary to utilize my piano-playing professionally, to acquire the wherewithal for violin lessons. My parents, both of whom had beautiful dispositions, encouraged my musical

IONEL TERTIS AND SOLOMON AT H.M.V. STUDIOS

nscribed) "To my old friend, Lionel."

SIR THOMAS BEECHAM

aspirations as best they could; but they were poor, and it was borne in upon me that I must do something to relieve the family budget as well as to realize my longing to play a string instrument. Another influence was my desire to get away from dreary Spitalfields. At the age of thirteen therefore, with my parents' permission, I left home to earn my living.

My first engagement was as a member of a so-called Hungarian band. We wore extraordinary costumes, which made us look more like brigands than Hungarians. We were all British. My collaboration with this not particularly inspiring team was for a summer season at Scarborough. Many other short-time jobs came my way—I tumbled out of one into another. A position I remember vividly was that of accompanist to a blind street-musician at Brighton. He was an excellent violinist and a lovable man. I lodged at his apartments, and every morning his attendant arrived with a bijou piano upon a barrow. The three of us went forth, and on the promenade nearby, where Brighton joins Hove, the violinist gave excellent performances of Vieuxtemps, Wieniawski and the like. Our attendant went round the usually big crowd with the money-box, and the takings were good. For my share in the performances the blind man paid me generously. Then in the summer season of 1892 I was pianist for eleven weeks in a small band performing on the pier at Southend-on-Sea. The pay, as compared with the standards of to-day, was meagre, but by practising economy I managed to add to my savings. In fact, I now had sufficient funds to enter Trinity College of Music in London.

I was nearly sixteen.

To peer back in memory at the England of those days is like looking at another world. I suppose the scene of to-day seems not less varied and jolly to young eyes, but our 1892 was surely a more sanguine and hopeful world and, unless memory deceives me, one of a more vivacious, a more care-free, laughing race of Britons. Without motor-horns and the infliction of roaring aircraft, was it not, too, a less noisy world than ours of to-day? Is it but one of time's illusions that the clatter of horse-drawn vehicles seems to me to have been more bearable than latter-day noises? The typical London sound —the tinkling of the bells of hansom cabs—was delicate and merry. Affluence was not mine; but pence then had a real purchasing value. Oranges were three or four for a penny, and the omnibus fare from Liverpool Street to Piccadilly was two-pence. At Southend my pay had been two pounds a week, and on this I not only lived but saved. (Be it said that I never indulged in the expense of meat during my sojourn there.)

Between the time of leaving home and 1892 I became the possessor of a violin of sorts and had a few spasmodic lessons from a man who, I afterwards realized, must have been the world's worst violin teacher. His name was Fenigstein, and he might well have ruined me as a string-player. He had cultivated a left-hand technique of breath-taking rapidity. Scales of fingered octaves and thirds were taken at lightning speed but in a manner appallingly slipshod. What wickednesses were his! Intonation was never corrected, accuracy of note-values never insisted upon; he cared nothing about

how bow or fiddle was held. What is necessary to become a fine violinist? First, one must be naturally musical; one must begin very young, have abundant time for application and be taught by a thorough master. How can a poor executant ever be a good teacher? The notion that he may be is a dangerous paradox, one that I would denounce without mercy. The teacher is a menace who cannot demonstrate his art at a pitch that will rouse the pupil to enthusiasm. Nor is this enough: the student should frequently, habitually listen to the greatest virtuosi. That is how I learnt my fiddling.

II

WELL do I recall my excitement at the thought of entering Trinity College in the never-to-be-forgotten Michaelmas term of 1892. My principal study was the piano, with R. W. Lewis, a very fine teacher; my second was the violin, with B. M. Carrodus, a good player and teacher. As for my harmony lessons with Dr. Saunders, I confess I have not the smallest recollection of him. But the College, in its archives, has me down as having been in his class.

I made considerable progress with the piano, playing concertos with the College orchestra, and I also had a few lessons on the organ during my short stay. My savings saw me through only two terms, ending with the Lent term of 1893, and then I had to go out into the world to earn money for further tuition. Whenever this state of the exchequer became apparent I used to resort to a copy of *The Era*, a weekly paper now defunct, which was devoted mainly to theatrical and music-hall interests, and was usually crammed with advertisements offering vacancies for all sorts of instrumentalists. Invariably I quickly got a job. One such was for a musician-attendant at a lunatic asylum at Preston in Lancashire. With the aid of a recommendation from Professor Bradbury Turner, the principal of Trinity College, I obtained the post. I will quote, for the sake of its Victorian

flavour, a letter he was good enough to address to me, shortly after I arrived at Preston.

> I am glad to hear you have got the appointment, and I trust you will be able to push on with your studies. You are very young, and it is a pity you are taken away so early from the necessary course, but we have to do the best for ourselves under such conditions. Many of our very best men have had to labour under the same difficulties, and have succeeded and been all the better for it. As I said, you are young and just the age for work and to achieve anything. Let me hope nothing will be allowed to draw you away from the right path and, as Schumann says in his maxims: "The laws of Morality are also the laws of Art." I trust you will have a good future. Remember, Study is unending.

My duties at the asylum included taking care of a certain number of the patients and also making music for them, along with other musician-attendants. I remember our playing seemed to awaken in them some sort of interest, but their general condition, so terribly destitute of any expectation, saddened me, and the hopelessness of the place was more than I could endure for long. Our conductor was an oboe player. I have always loved the timbre of the oboe, when well played, and he was an admirable executant. He tried to teach it to me in our spare time, but he soon gave up the attempt.

From the asylum, again via *The Era*, I was soon engaged at Clacton-on-Sea as pianist at an establishment which rejoiced in the name of "Rigg's Retreat". It was owned by a violinist named Badger, who catered mainly for East London school-treats. Part of my duties was to play the piano to his violin-playing to hundreds of children

in an enormous dining-hall, during their meals. Badger, a tolerable and enthusiastic violinist, was an extraordinarily corpulent man, and there remains in my mind a ludicrous preliminary to our performances. He was obliged to undo his braces, for only in this way, so he explained, could he reach the G string with his bow with any degree of comfort. One tip he gave me, which I have now and then found useful, was that when one had little time for practice one's fingers could be kept supple by closing the fist very tightly and then violently and stiffly throwing out the fingers to their full extent.

With my funds replenished from these and other engagements, I was able to return to Trinity College for the Trinity term of three months. This time, to my satisfaction, I concentrated on violin lessons only, with B. M. Carrodus. As a result of this period of intensified work on the instrument of my choice I was fired with the ambition of going abroad for further tuition. It was being continually impressed upon me that Continental musical training was far better than our own—a fallacious supposition, in point of fact, with which I eventually most vehemently disagreed. So far as the violin was concerned there were teachers in London second to none, such as Arbos, Rivarde, Sauret and Willy Hess. However, I had heard so much of the great traditions of the Leipzig Conservatorium that I resolved to go there by hook or crook. There was a superstitious reverence for Leipzig in the England of that time, thanks to Mendelssohn, to whom the reputation of the institution was due, even though he had been dead for more than forty years. How greatly the Conservatorium had deteriorated I was

soon to find. With my mother's help I was able to realise my desire, and managed to stay for a six-months course. The Gewandhaus concerts provided fuel for my musical passion; but I learnt precious little from my teachers, and particularly little in my principal study, the violin. My teacher, Professor Bolland, paid small or no attention to what or how I played. His room at the Conservatorium was an extremely long one. I played at one end, and during most of my lesson he was generally at the other end of it engrossed in his collection of postage stamps. English and American students were there in numbers in my time, and no love was lost between us and the German students. Feelings were expressed not in mere casual blows but even in pitched battles. The authorities well knew of this but never troubled to interfere.

I returned to London after six unprofitable months, and towards the end of 1895 I became an intermittent student at the Royal Academy of Music. My first term was paid for by Lionel de Rothschild. Young, hard-up and ambitious as I was, I had written to him to state my case, having heard of his generosity to others; and the reply was to the effect that Mr. de Rothschild would like a note from the Principal of the Academy, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, about my capabilities. I played to Sir Alexander—himself a violinist—and the result was a ten-pound note from Rothschild. So it came about, with help from various engagements I undertook, I studied the violin at the Academy, off and on, under Hans Wessely until the end of 1897. One outside job I remember during my studentship was as the leader of a quintet, or

perhaps it was a sextet, at Madame Tussaud's, dressed in a peculiar garb of archaic military cut.

The Academy was not housed in its present grandeur. Its home was in a number of ill-adapted old houses in Tenterden street, off Hanover square. From the age of thirteen I had lived like a wandering Arab, but now I enjoyed something like a permanent lodging. At the Academy I made friends with a fellow fiddler, Spencer Dyke, who came from Plymouth, and we shared an apartment in Greencroft Gardens at Hampstead. We were both full of ambition, and used to vie with each other in the practice we put in during the day. We spent our holidays together, seeking out some quiet seaside village where we could work undisturbed. One summer we were at Corton near Great Yarmouth, and the holiday stays in my mind because Dyke was practising Bach's *Chaconne* furiously at the time. When he had a difficulty to overcome he would stand in a corner of the room facing the wall, slaving away without budging for unconscionable periods. He used to say that was the position in which he could exercise most concentration.

Hans Wessely, who taught me the violin, was a good fiddler, a classical player, rather cold, but with a fine technical ability. He was dictatorial, inclined to be conceited and, as a teacher, rather harsh. He taught well up to a point—only up to a point, however, for the most important tricks of the trade he jealously kept to himself. He was an able quartet-leader, and I learnt much from him about string-quartet playing, later on, when I was the viola in his quartet. I once witnessed a strange incident brought on by a failure of nerves—all the stranger

since the self-assured Wessely was usually the master of his nerves. He was playing Saint-Saëns's sparkling *Rondo Capriccioso,* and at the point where comes a long glissando chromatic scale from the top of the fiddle his bow got on the wrong side of the bridge. There it danced for the whole length of the glissando down the E string. We heard a long succession of squeaks before he realized what he was doing and jumped the bow back to its right place.

III

In my early stages at the Academy Wessely, who was Viennese, thought poorly of my efforts, and he told my father—though I heard nothing of this until much later—that I had better give up the violin, being more fitted for the grocery trade. My lessons, however, continued. About the middle of 1896 a fellow violin student, Percy Hilder Miles, came to me with the suggestion that I should take up the viola. He wanted to play string quartets, and there was not one viola student in the institution. So casual was the discovery of my mission in life, my discovery, indeed, of that beautiful, soon-to-be-beloved viola to which I was to devote the best part of fifty-five years! The instrument that was then the Cinderella of the world of music but is so no more!

The viola in those days was generally played by violinists too inferior to gain a position in orchestras as such. A wretchedly low standard of viola-playing was, in fact, accepted. A little old man, said to be a professional viola player, was engaged by the Academy to take part twice a week in the orchestral practices. What a player he was! He used a very small instrument, not worthy of the name viola, and he produced from it as ugly a sound as fiddle ever emitted — a bone-dry tone, absolutely devoid of vibrato, which made one's hair stand on end. Sir Alexander Mackenzie once told me he considered

him a necessary evil.

Mackenzie had himself been a violinist before gaining, as a composer, a position alongside Sullivan, Parry and Stanford as one of the leaders of the British musical renaissance. It was his destiny in the latter part of his life to eclipse his creative reputation by the extraordinary ability he showed as a pedagogue and administrator. The Academy, when he became its principal (in 1888), was in low water. The general inefficiency of the institution had led to the founding of the Royal College of Music which, with Grove, Parry and Stanford as its leading spirits, was soon to grow from strength to strength. Mackenzie's glory is to have restored the Academy to prosperity and a brilliant position in the world of art, despite the powerful competition in South Kensington. Mackenzie was a man of strong personality, a linguist and a wit. His drawback was in his temper. He could be ungovernably violent. I remember how a talented boy, still in knickerbockers, turned up one day with his first orchestral work. There were some mistakes in the manuscript, and Mackenzie, who conducted the twice-a-week orchestral practices, exploded with wrath, going for the boy so furiously before the orchestra that the poor little composer went away in tears, vowing he would never write another note. Happily he did not stick to his vow, but wrote many more notes. His name was York Bowen.

Mackenzie's compositions are hardly ever heard nowadays, and no doubt many of them are dead beyond recall, including the series of his festival cantatas, settings of wishy-washy texts which he, clever man that he was, can never have believed in.

But I recall with pleasure some of his instrumental works, the Pibroch for violin and orchestra, for instance, and the piano quartet. Sarasate used to play the Pibroch and the violin concerto, and Paderewski the piano concerto, works one would have thought worthy of revival at the Edinburgh Festival, for Mackenzie was an Edinburgh man. But his centenary passed unnoticed at Edinburgh in 1947.

To return to the proposal that I should take up the viola. The idea of playing in a string-quartet attracted me. I borrowed an instrument from the Academy, and was immediately interested by the peculiarity of its tone, so distinct from the other members of the string family, though it was, as usual at that time, a small viola, incapable of true C string sonority. I worked at it for a week, mastering the clef, and the quartet then met. We rehearsed an early Beethoven work for about a fortnight, and it was then arranged that we should play to the Principal. I can see the old Tenterden-street concert hall now, with Mackenzie sitting alone to listen to us. Afterwards he came to the platform and asked me how long I had been playing the viola. When I said, "Three weeks", his reply was, "Well, in my opinion you will never regret it."

Thence onward I worked hard and, being dissatisfied with my teacher, I resolved to continue my study by myself. I consider that I learnt to play principally through listening. Above all, from listening to Kreisler—but Kreisler, the unmatchable, had not yet risen above my horizon (he first appeared in London in 1901).

In 1902 I met my future wife at Stafford House

— which was to become the London Museum — where she heard me play, and again a little later at a concert given by the London Diocesan Orchestra, a body that consisted of about forty women players, mostly amateurs. The orchestra was conducted by the talented Margaret Haweis, sister of the author of a once famous book, *Music and Morals*. The orchestra played well under her baton, and it gave concerts over all the poorer districts of London—a good deal in the East End. One day Miss Ada Gawthrop — my future wife — came to the Royal Academy and asked me to give her viola lessons, a proposal to which I readily assented. Often after we were married I would tell her that Stafford House was the cause of her downfall.

In 1906 it was the rarest thing to hear a viola solo, and even so the upper range of the instrument was unexplored. Players never went above the second leger-line in the treble clef. Once I played Mendelssohn's violin concerto on the viola at an Academy concert, and I remember Alfred Gibson's reproaches. He played viola in the Joachim Quartet. "The viola", he burst out, "is not meant to be played high up! That is the pig department! I suppose the next thing is you will be playing behind the bridge."

In 1897 a fellow student lent me a Guadagnini viola. It had, alas, been cut down as usual, but the tone was far better than that of the Academy instrument, and from that moment I became an enthusiast, resolved that my life's work should be the establishing of the viola's rights as a solo instrument.

IV

I JUMP ahead a little in my story to say that after leaving the Academy to earn my living I returned there for a while in 1899-1900, when I was appointed sub-professor of the viola. One of my duties was to play in the string orchestra, conducted by Emile Sauret, then professor of the violin at the R.A.M. A wonderful player, he turned out a galaxy of brilliant players during his professorship. He was a delightful, jolly Frenchman, whose English, in spite of all the years he spent in London, remained sketchy. He possessed the most amazing left-hand technique I have ever known. His bow-arm, too, was wonderful. I was appointed full professor in 1901, and my playing must have improved, for my former teacher Wessely now invited me to play in his quartet. My first engagement with him was at the Holloway Polytechnic, for which he paid me the fee of five shillings.

After leaving the Royal Academy of Music the first time I obtained a position as violinist was in Henry Wood's Queen's Hall Orchestra. I was the last player at the last desk of the second violins. Arthur Payne led the orchestra at that time. Long before its destruction in 1941 the Queen's Hall changed in appearance from those early days, when the principal colours were buff and scarlet, and immense lamps with fringes of scarlet silk hung over the orchestra. For nearly fifty years that splendid

hall was the centre of music-making in London. We shall never see its like again. The economic pressure makes a hall of that capacity (2,400) unpractical. Clever architects, acousticians and engineers have done a wonderful job in the new Waterloo hall, but they have not been able to work miracles or overcome the fact that the economic side of present-day music-making necessitates a hall larger than the ideal.

I worked at the viola in my spare hours and, having attracted Henry Wood's attention, I one day jumped from last violinist to principal viola in the orchestra. In the meantime Kreisler had appeared in London. For me the experience of hearing him was like falling in love. His glowing tone, his vibrato, unique and inexpressibly beautiful, his phrasing, which in everything he played was so peculiarly his own, the manly grace of his bow-arm, his attitude, at once highly strung and assured, the passionate sincerity of his interpretations—all this made me follow him around like a dog. Those early performances of his remain indelibly impressed on my memory. I recall one of Brahms's concerto. Complete enchantment! At the end of a recital he gave at the Crystal Palace I could not help running after him. He was leaving with his friend Pedro Morales. Overcome by the effect of his marvellous playing I blurted out to him, "Would you give me some lessons?" Morales knew me and told him my name. Kreisler said: "What do you want lessons for? Besides, my dear friend, I travel so much—I have no time". The most unbelievable of all unbelievable things to me that day would have been that a time would come when I was to

enjoy the privilege and delight of playing with him (at New York, at Boston, Mass., and in London) Mozart's *E flat Symphonie Concertante* for violin and viola. The crowning experience of my life has been to rehearse with this prince of men.

I led the violas at Queen's Hall until 1904. One day Robert Newman, manager of the orchestra, came to the platform during a rehearsal and made a revolutionary announcement. He told us in a few words that henceforward no deputies would be allowed to play.

The deputy system had long been the bane of orchestral playing in London. The story goes that a member once sent to the first rehearsal of a concert a deputy, who in his turn sent a deputy to the second rehearsal and this deputy's deputy turned up at the concert. The excuse, if there is one, for this paradoxical state of things is that by present-day standards players were miserably paid and were irresistibly tempted to accept the most remunerative job that was going. But it was indefensible. True, it made for quick reading — London orchestral players were the readiest readers in the world. But what a shameful situation, all the same!

Newman's announcement led to an historic secession. Some forty of Wood's players refused to relinquish their old privilege. They resigned and set about the organizing of a self-governing orchestra, the London Symphony. I was invited to join them as their principal viola, but I declined and at the same time resigned my position in the Queen's Hall Orchestra. Before this happened I had made up my mind to give up orchestral playing as soon as pos-

THE LADY FERMOY

PHYLLIS MACDONALD, ADNA RYERSON, WINIFRED COPPERWHEAT, JOAN MULHOLLAND,
who publicly performed Haydn's 84 String Quartets in 27 weekly recitals at the Royal Academy of Music, 1927-8.

sible and devote all my time to solo work. The Queen's Hall crisis was my opportunity. On the one hand I was devoted to Henry Wood, and on the other was attached to my colleagues of the secession. By renouncing orchestral playing altogether I hoped to avoid hurting the feelings of either party.

I had greatly benefited by my experience as a member of Wood's orchestra. I learnt from him what good phrasing was, the accurate value of notes and of rests, and many another detail of help to musicianship, not to speak of discipline and punctuality. Wood was a man of active mind and great vitality, with a prodigious capacity for work. He was a martinet, as he had need to be to get through all the enterprises he undertook. Himself punctual to a fault, he could not forgive time-wasting in others. Years later I came into touch with him at a B.B.C. studio concert, where I was to play a viola concerto. Through faulty staff-work I had been given the wrong time for the rehearsal and Wood had already begun. He stopped the orchestra to upbraid me, and would not be placated by my explanations. All through the rehearsal he was morose, and he found fault at any or no provocation. Something he said at last cut me to the quick. At one point in the work the first oboe and I had to play one or two B flats in unison. Wood turned suddenly to me and said: "Intonation! Intonation! Your B flat is sharp!" To me that accusation was a red rag to a bull. I exploded with rage. All my life I have concentrated on true intonation, and flattered myself on being pretty good at it. The orchestra stopped, and I played a

succession of B flats—crescendo, forte, fortissimo! Then I bellowed: "That's my B flat! And there's nothing wrong with it! Ask your oboe-player about his B flat!" At this H.J.W. merely exclaimed in his high-pitched counter-tenor voice: "Hoity toity!" Things after this calmed down, the rehearsal finished after a placid course and I forgave what I considered a gross indignity. I was fond of H.J.W., and at night we gave a good show. No one in the world could steer one through a work better than he, when he felt like it.

V

In spite of my resolution I did, after all, return to orchestral playing for a time, being unable to resist an offer from the young Thomas Beecham to play as principal viola in an orchestra he was forming, to be led by Albert Sammons. I say "the young Beecham"; but in a sense the word is superfluous, for Beecham is a man who never has grown old. What a fountain of musical genius, charm and exuberant spirits he has always been! People will in years to come try their hands at recording his career, but the cleverest pen will never recapture the sparkle of his music-making or the wit of his speech. Once and once only have I known him speechless. A German tenor who went by the name of Tamini sang at a number of concerts during a provincial tour undertaken by the Beecham orchestra (this was in 1909), and the incident occurred in an hotel at Preston after our performance. Tamini, evidently full of enthusiasm for Beecham's conducting of the aria he had sung, suddenly flung his arms round his neck and fervently embraced him. Unforgettable for me is Beecham's face and look of horror. Words failed him . . . I regret to have to say that poor Tamini was made to pay for his indiscretion. A heartless plot was hatched. After he had retired to his top-floor bedroom it was arranged that a message should be sent to his room to the effect that he was wanted at

the telephone—his wife had put through an urgent call from London. Down he came in agitation and a dressing-gown, and while he was wrestling with the telephone members of the orchestra raided his room and flung his possessions out of the window. It was a rainy night. There was a sequel to this folly. Tamini complained to the police, and the next morning, at the station, our train was delayed—much to the station-master's annoyance — while detectives questioned the players. They were unsuccessful with their enquiries, and meanwhile the station-master expressed his impatience forcibly. The orchestra determined to reprove him for his lack of urbanity by letting off fireworks whenever we passed through Preston station, as we frequently did. The last time we provided an imposing display, and earned in Lancashire the name "the fireworks orchestra". It was a very young orchestra.

Beecham, for all his lack of experience, imposed himself on one and all by his instinctive musicianship and brilliance. From the first he was a leader of men. Already he possessed a magnetic influence to draw out the best in his players. How much the musical world has owed to his marvellous gifts! Sometimes it is suggested that fire and exciting impetuosity are his great characteristics, but that is not enough to say: equally important in his art is his command of subtle nuances. Has there ever been a comparable conductor of Mozart? Here he is unique, with realisations of supreme loveliness.

My year with Beecham was an interlude. My own vocation was calling me, and soon I was back on the platform as a soloist—an obstinate, ill-rewarded, never-to-be-discouraged viola soloist, in

days when most people had not heard a viola solo in their lives. I would give as many as six recitals in a London season, with programmes largely made up of new English music. Those were times when the native Muse was largely out of favour, and I have the satisfaction of knowing that the formation of the British Music Society was the result of my persistence. Stanley Hawley, who was secretary of the Royal Philharmonic Society, was my principal supporter in this movement. In an appendix to this book a list will be found of compositions written for me, and I also give a list of the arrangements I have myself made to help provide the viola with a repertory.

VI

FROM the beginning of my campaign I begged for viola compositions from the younger English composers; and great is my debt to them. Such was their response that the British library of viola music is the most extensive and best in the world; and in course of time foreign composers, too, wrote for the viola. In my young days only two major works for the viola existed, namely Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Mozart's *Symphonie Concertante**. Arnold Bax, York Bowen and Benjamin Dale were among the first to make contributions to the new literature, and I owe much to them both. It was pure generosity in those days—the beginning of the century—to write for the solo viola. Publishers would not consider anything of the sort, but both Dale and Bowen wrote a number of works for me. The style of their music belongs to its period, but it was beautiful and was a powerful influence in the advancement of the viola. Dale's Suite for viola and piano (the Romance and Finale of which the composer later arranged for viola and orchestra), in particular, I must mention.

*This enchanting concerto lay for generations unknown to all but scholars. The world in general ignored it. Even so recently as 1924, when I played in it with Kreisler at the Albert Hall, the newspapers came out with such phrases as these: "Mozart's rarely heard Concertante . . . containing some of Mozart's choicest music . . . This little-known work . . . These men played a practically unknown Concertante of Mozart."

The Romance contains a melody which I consider one of the loveliest ever conceived—it is also one of the longest of melodies (thirty-eight bars!). Dale was a greatly gifted but strangely reticent musician. Something in his character, something finical, ultra-fastidious, seemed as time went on to check his creative impulse; and the high hopes entertained for his future were disappointed.

On my first appearance as soloist for the Royal Philharmonic Society, on March 26, 1908, I introduced York Bowen's concerto. Landon Ronald conducted. I have played at nineteen Philharmonic Concerts. My second appearance there (May 18, 1911) was a nightmare. Nikisch was conducting, and I was to give the first performance of Dale's Romance and Finale. The famous conductor, secure in his immense reputation, had not taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the work, and he gave us a casual, hasty and utterly inadequate rehearsal. Such was the attitude, still tolerated in 1911, of a lordly foreigner towards the native Muse.

Here are other first performances I gave of works with orchestra: Arnold Bax's Concerto in D minor (November 17, 1921, under Albert Coates); Vaughan Williams's *Flos Campi* (November, 1925, under Wood); my arrangement of Elgar's cello concerto (March 21, 1930, the composer conducting); Vaughan Williams's Suite (November 12, 1934, under Malcolm Sargent); Holst's Lyric Piece (March 18, 1934, under Adrian Boult); T. F. Dunhill's *Triptych* (August 19, 1942, under Boult). Richard Walthew's *Mosaic in ten Pieces* (July 10, 1943, under Clarence Raybould). I am proud that these and other works should have

been dedicated to me. Vaughan Williams inscribed *Flos Campi* with the words: "To Lionel with much gratitude"; and William Walton his viola concerto with, "For Lionel Tertis with gratitude for everything he has done for this work and for his magnificent playing of it."

The mention of Walton's masterpiece brings me to a confession. With shame and contrition I admit that when the composer offered me the first performance I declined it. I was unwell at the time; but what is also true is that I had not learnt to appreciate Walton's style. The innovations in his language, which now seem so logical and so truly in the main stream of music, struck me as far-fetched. It took me time to realize what a tower of strength in the literature of the viola was this concerto, and how deep would be the gratitude we who play the viola should feel toward the composer—with gratitude, too, to Beecham for having suggested to Walton the composition of a viola concerto. I remember that, when Walton came to me with it and I refused the honour, he was generous enough not to seem to take it too much amiss but asked me to suggest someone else to undertake the performance. I immediately thought of Paul Hindemith, then a much-talked-of composer and a viola-player too. So it was that Hindemith played the work for the first time at Queen's Hall. I was there, and felt great disappointment at his playing. The notes, certainly, were all there, but the tone was cold and unpleasing. The viola can be the ugliest of stringed instruments unless warmth is imparted to its characteristic tone.

A chance was offered to me to play a concerto by Hindemith himself. In a letter from the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra it was suggested that it would be pleasing for a British artist to play the composition of a German viola soloist. I perused the score and found that most of it was crammed with fiendishly difficult passage-work—the sort of thing Hindemith played marvellously. It was not music to me, and I reluctantly refused the offer.

The Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Furtwängler, paid a series of highly successful visits to London between the wars, and for some reason the public was inordinately captivated. Being in Berlin, where I was giving a recital, I took the opportunity of going to one of their concerts, looking forward to great things, after all I had heard about their performances at home. I was disappointed to the degree that I did not sit the programme out. No doubt they were well disciplined; but it was the coldest playing I had ever heard in my life, particularly on the part of the strings. And the brass was blatant. Not that I have ever considered our own string-players to be adequately warm. I put their deficiency down to the traditional suppression of emotional expression which in the course of generations has become part of the English character. But hang it all! How is the sound of a contraption of wood and gut to be made worth listening to if one does not bring to bear every ounce of vitality and emotional sensibility of which one is capable? All the same, our orchestral string-players were infinitely more expressive than the Berliners of that time.

VII

My chronology is getting muddled. I must go back to 1914. War came, the Kaiser's War that was to impoverish and disrupt the civilized world. Whatever our apprehensions, we little realized that it was to spell the end of the sanguine, prosperous, hopefully forward-looking Europe most of us regarded as solidly established—a civilization capable of improvement, of course, but at the same time representing the highest degree so far attained in the history of humanity.

In due course I was called up for service, was relegated to category C3, and was appointed a Special Constable. When I was not patrolling I was posted to guard a reservoir. There was a hut in which I used to practice surreptitiously, with a heavy brass mute; and my inspector, when he came along, would wink the other eye. Now and then I would be released from duty to allow me to give recitals at various cathedrals, which I had organized for war charities.

Early in the war many Belgian refugees came to England. Among them were the violinist Désiré Defauw, the cellist Emile Doehaerd, and Joseph Jongen, composer and pianist. I joined with these three to form the Belgian Piano Quartet. The great Ysayë, too was in London, and I had the honour of playing with him many times. He and I played Mozart's *Symphonie Concertante* at Queen's Hall

on February 28, 1916, with Beecham conducting. Ysayë promised to write a cadenza for this performance, but he did not finish it in time. Years passed and I had forgotten all about it when, in 1950, I received from the great violinist's son, Antoine, the manuscript of the composition, inscribed : "A mon ami Lionel Tertis."

With Kreisler I first played the *Concertante* in New York on January 29, 1924. We met three days before the concert, and Kreisler there and then wrote two most difficult cadenzas. I had two days in which to commit my part to memory. Jacques Thibaud heard us, and at once invited me to play the work with him in Paris.

But I must go back to Ysaye. He was a glorious artist, with a tone of prodigious volume and inordinate technical powers. He was a huge man, and he smoked a correspondingly huge pipe. Even his match-boxes were outsize. Only his violin was of standard dimensions, and in his hands it looked a toy. I retain a vivid memory of his leading the most exciting performance of Franck's quintet I have ever known. He took the finale at a terrific pace. Not that the effect was rushed—it all seemed like a torrential inspiration, exhilarating and wonderful. Those who heard him only towards the end of his life know but the shadow of his art. Among his compositions are six sonatas for solo violin, one of which, the fourth, he dedicated to Kreisler. Philip Newman told me that he stood outside the bedroom door on the day Ysayë died and played this sonata to him. He was afterwards informed by Antoine Ysayë that his father opened his eyes when he heard the violin and, at the end of the

first movement, murmured, "Very fine!" During the finale Ysayë tried to beat time, and when the sonata came to an end Ysaye said, "Splendid!—but a little too fast." Those were the last words he spoke.

I call to mind a private rehearsal of the *Concertante*, the day before the Beecham concert, at which Ysayë arranged all the phrasing he wanted. This went as planned at the orchestral rehearsal the next morning; but unaccountably enough he radically altered most of his phrasing on the night, and I had to copy him on the spur of the moment. Phew! After the performance, just off the platform, I suddenly found two great saucer-eyes quite close to my face, and a stentorian voice said, "Well down! Well down!" Voice and saucer-eyes belonged to that picturesque and adorable Spanish cellist Augustin Rubio, who had lived in England for years but could never get his pronunciation right. The next day I had a letter from him—

My Dear Monarch and friend Tertis,

I send you with my congratulations for your *perfect* rendering of Mozart *Concertante* the notice in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Hoping you find at last your beautiful bed in the proper way to take a COLOSSAL rest,

I send you both my love.

Augustin Rubio.

Some days later a message came to Ysayë from Lord Curzon saying that the little daughter of the Queen of the Belgians was staying with them at Hackwood, and asking him whether he would come and make some music. Arthur Rubinstein was in London, and Ysaye collected three others to form a quintet—Albert Sammons, Emile Doehaerd and

myself. We went down for the day, but so engrossed were we all (including our host) by the music that we overlooked the clock and missed the last London train. So at Hackwood we spent the night, kitless. Lord Curzon produced one unused toothbrush, which he put up for auction. He lent me a suit of his pyjamas—the pyjamas of a man of about twice my size.

In that year the King and Queen of the Belgians invited Ysayë to go over to La Panne — in the narrow strip of unoccupied Belgium—to play to them and others near the battle-front. Ysayë invited me to join the party, which included his brother Théo, a pianist, Doehaerd the cellist, and a Belgian poet named Rousseau. This visit lasted for seven days, and for me the experience of having been so near the dreadful theatre, thoughts of which pre-occupied men's minds for four wearing years, is something never to be forgotten. I kept a diary, with naive jottings on my horror at seeing deserted villages, ruined churches and the other signs of war's ravages—signs later on to become familiar to more millions even than those who saw them in 1914-18. While we played at the Royal Villa and at field hospitals the guns were booming in the distance. Before I left I was escorted on a tour of the front-line trenches, and I felt a sort of satisfaction in seeing a shell explode not very far off. This was, needless to say, not a time of major operations in the North. It had so far been the year of the long-drawn-out agony of Verdun ; and the fearful Battle of the Somme was in preparation. A sequel to my tour was King Albert's bestowing on me the decoration of Knight of the Order of the Crown.

VIII

In London that year Ysayë came to a recital of mine at the Æolian Hall where I played my G minor version of Bach's *D minor Chaconne*. To my surprise he came to the platform at the end of the performance and publicly embraced me. I should perhaps have said before now that, after long preparation, I took my courage in both hands in 1911 and gave the first performance of the *Chaconne* on the viola. I had practised it for years, and in the simplicity of my heart imagined that the audacious enterprise would make the viola talked about all over the town. Some people, I reckoned, might denounce me for foolhardiness or impiety towards Bach, and others might be favourably impressed and even enthusiastic. What happened was something I was totally unprepared for. (Remember, dear reader, that there were twice as many London newspapers then as now, that they were twice or thrice the size they now are, and that musical criticism was taken very seriously indeed—nearly every London concert was discussed in detail, some of the newspapers having three or four critics apiece.) What happened, for some reason, was that the concert was ignored by one and all. I was taken aback, and must have felt very indignant, to judge by a letter I wrote to my friend Frederick Corder, the composer, who was then Curator at the Royal Acadamy of Music. In

the course of it I angrily suggested that my being British was the reason for the journalists' neglect of my *Chaconne,* and I threatened to go off to the Continent and start a fresh career there. Corder was another disappointed man. In his reply he said:

> Is it any consolation to know that others are suffering even more than yourself? I have had five such disappointments during the last fortnight, and if I were twenty years younger should certainly feel like chucking the whole thing up. As it is, I endeavour to console myself with the belief that no really good effort is in vain. Such a performance as you gave the other night will long live in the memories of those who were present, and some good must come of it eventually.

When once I mentioned to Elgar the pedantic objections sometimes made against my transcriptions he exclaimed: "What nonsense! What of the multitudinous arrangements that the great masters themselves have made?" And when, many years after the *Chaconne* I tried my hand at his violoncello concerto, he authorized me to print on the viola part: "Arranged with the sanction of the composer." I had, the first time I heard this concerto, been struck by its suitability for the viola. I had long hoped for a viola work from the great man; and here was the next best thing. In 1929 I undertook the transcription and then wrote to Sir Edward in fear and trepidation to tell him what I had done.

Elgar then had for thirty years been the principal figure on the English musical scene. The *Enigma Variations* and *Gerontius* had made him a national hero; and the works that followed, the

two oratorios, the two symphonies, the violin concerto and *Falstaff*, to name no others, had one and all stirred the public to an enthusiasm no other native music of such pretensions had ever known. To meet Elgar was immediately to be aware of a majestic personality. He was not easily approachable, and his speech with strangers was sometimes laconic and rather forbidding. The clue to this lies in the fact that he was at heart a shy and thin-skinned man. Once the ice was broken he could be exquisitely charming. He was a man of surprisingly varied interests, and among his characteristics unknown to the outside world was a whimsical humour. He was capable of expressing himself in biting words. I remember, early in the 1920's when "bitonalism" was first heard of, his uttering an opinion hostile to the new dissonance in devastating terms.

To my request that he should hear me play his E minor concerto I received, to my delight, a favourable reply, and it was arranged that George Reeves and I should go down to Stratford-on-Avon, where Elgar was then living, to give a performance with piano. Reeves, then one of the most accomplished accompanists in London, has since left us to make fame and fortune in America.

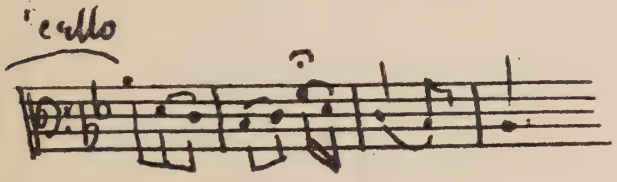
I had prepared a little plot to surprise Elgar. The slow movement of the cello concerto all lies within the viola's compass with the exception of one note. That is to say, it can all be played on the viola at the same pitch—all but a single B flat, How was this B flat to be tackled? I decided to do it by tuning my C string down to B flat for the purpose, and took Reeves into the secret. We

The Chamber Music Players : KENNEDY, TERTIS. MURDOCH. SAMMONS.
The Harold Bauer Piano Quartet : HUBERMAN, SALMOND, BAUER, TERTIS.

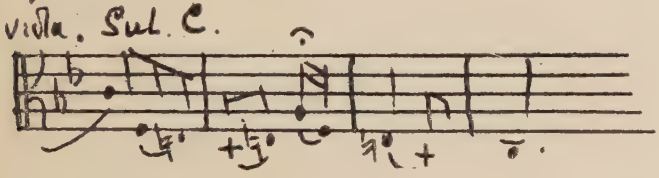
HOLKHAM HALL

Rehearsal, Royal Albert Hall, London. BEECHAM, TERTIS, KREISLER.

agreed that before beginning the slow movement he should ramble on the piano for a little to distract Elgar's attention from what I was up to. The operation proceeded according to plan; and never shall I forget Elgar's looks of growing consternation as we approached the low B flat in this phrase:

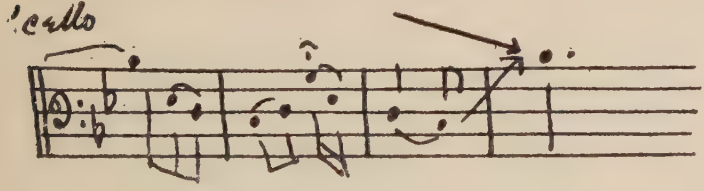


which in my version is written :—



(C string tuned down to B flat)

I could see writ on Elgar's face: "Surely this fellow is not going to do this!"



When I played the low B flat he nearly sprang out of his chair with surprise and delight. I hastened to say that I had also written an alternative version an octave higher to avoid alteration

of tuning but his reply to this was: "Oh no, my dear boy—you must play it tuning the C down—it's grand!" I had let myself in for something, for the pause between the slow movement and the finale is extremely short, and the very few bars of orchestral introduction to the last movement are quite out of the key for tuning purposes. However, on the several occasions I have played the work I have always tuned my string down, though the alternative part was published for those who shirked tackling this.

To my pride and joy Elgar agreed to conduct the first public performance. I had been working hard and at the concert all seemed to be going well until, at about the twentieth bar of the finale, my A string broke. Everything, of course, stopped while I replaced the string (I had another in my pocket, so did not have to leave the platform), but it was as though a spell, as well as a string, had broken, and the finale suffered. There was a cloud over the rest of the evening. To celebrate the appearance of a viola concerto boasting the great name of Elgar I had arranged a supper party at the Ritz after the concert; but I was down in the mouth, and Elgar, too, seemed affected by the contretemps. At table he had a little dig at me, saying: "These affluent viola players—they think nothing of arranging a royal banquet at the best hotel in London!" The papers the next morning had more to say about my quickness in replacing the string than the important fact of a new viola concerto.

I wiped out this sad performance by subsequent ones, and I am proud of the letters I received from Elgar.

Marl Bank, Rainbow Hill, Worcester, 12th June, 1932.

My dear Tertis, Thank you many times for your letter which arrived just as I was addressing this envelope to you. I listened with the greatest happiness; your playing was wonderful and we were thrilled. I admired your low C/B flat which came through marvellously; the whole thing was a picture and sounded to the miserable author (who has a cold) divine. Marco[2], who is still wearing his collar, listened also and sends his love with mine.

Yours very sincerely and gratefully,

Edward Elgar.

Marl Bank, 26th August 1932.

My dear Tertis, I send my thanks for your *splendid playing*; it was fine beyond words. Marco sends his love and is still very vain over his collar[3].

Marl Bank, 13th September, 1933.

My dear Tertis, I have had no opportunity to write since the Hereford Festival, or I should have sent you long ago heartiest thanks for your superb playing of your Concerto. It was a wonderful reading, and I thank you. Marco, brave in his collar, and I wish we met oftener, but I am seldom away from home now.

Elgar conducted at this Hereford performance. Things went well, and as we walked from the platform together he whispered to me, "Good boy!"—words which, from him, meant much. He was not very well at Hereford, but I did not know of the dire disease that had seized upon him, and never for a moment dreamed that this would be the last time he was to conduct. He died that winter. Once I asked him whether there was a chance of an original work for viola from his pen, and he told

[2]Marco, a spaniel to which Elgar was devoted.

[3]A smart collar I had given Marco.

me he had some sketches somewhere—he would look them up. My hopes, alas, were not to be realized.

In 1929 I arranged Delius's second violin sonata for viola. The composer heard a gramophone recording, and sent me this letter :

> Grez-sur-Loing, 1/12/29.
>
> Dear Tertis, I have only just heard my 2nd Violin Sonata played by you for the "Columbia". It is marvellously beautiful, and I am overjoyed. I cannot imagine it better played. You have got *so* inside the music, and I never thought the viola could sound so lovely. What a great artist you are! The *Hassan Serenade* is also quite beautiful. The few bars you repeat an octave lower only enhance the piece. Please also thank Mr. Reeves for his excellent collaboration.

A might-have-been I have always regretted was a Ravel composition for the viola. I visited Ravel in Paris and played to him in his flat. It was wintertime, and the heat of the room is something I shall never forget. It was as though I were being baked in an oven. I played Dale's *Romance and Finale*, with him at the piano, and managed to get through it without being actually roasted. Ravel was charming and complimentary, and at the end he promised to write a work for viola. The score was to include a small orchestra and concealed choir (*bouches fermées*). There was to be an alternative part for harmonium for occasions when a choir was not available. I went away rejoicing, but the project came to nothing.

IX

With apologies to chronology I go back to more distant years to speak of my first experiences of America.

In 1908 Willy Hess, that splendid violinist—the master of a wonderfully clean, clear, accurate technique — invited me to go with him to the United States to join a string quartet he was forming there. My aptitude for business has always been under-developed ; and off I went without a contract. My first experience of the great republic was brief. On arriving at Boston, Mass., I found that the terms offered to me were vastly inferior to those I had been promised in London. The American prospect, I decided, was uninviting, and exactly three weeks after arriving I departed in the *Lusitania*. It is only right to admit that there was another factor in my decision. I was homesick and longing for England, having become engaged to my future wife just before leaving.

My second visit to the United States was longer and more fruitful, though it began with a queer experience in the office of a New York agent. I had not been in the room for two minutes when the telephone bell rang and, after a brief preliminary, I heard my impressario say : "Oh yes, I can sell you Tertis for so-and-so many dollars." I felt like a captive on sale at a slave-market or a sack of potatoes. But I soon realized that this was the

natural way of quoting an artist's fee. On this my first American tour I learnt how inspiring it is to play in the great cities of that country. They are eagerly receptive, and at the same time—accustomed as they are to the finest artists of the whole world—experienced and discriminating. If your efforts satisfy them you may well pat yourself on the back! Among the delightful people I met was Mrs. Frederick Coolidge. I remember her giving me one day a valuable hint. I had complained to her that I had not been able to master some difficult passages in a work I had been slaving at for weeks. Her reply was: "Go on practising the difficulties and forget about all the work you put into them. And remember these two words: DON'T WEAKEN!"

During my early years I played the viola in a number of teams, including the Wessely Quartet, London String Quartet (with Albert Sammons as leader), Louis Zimmerman Quartet, Emile Sauret Quartet, Kruse Quartet and Willy Hess Quartet in England; and in America the Harold Bauer Piano Quartet, this last consisting of Bauer, Huberman, myself and Felix Salmond.

The ordinary Pullman of an American train has a good-sized wash-house at either end, one for men and the other for women. Bronislaw Huberman was an insatiable man for practising, and on our journeys he would be found in the men's wash-house playing his violin from morning till night, meal-times only excepted. He never stopped, no matter how many passengers were performing their ablutions, and how it came about that he was never forcibly restrained from turning the wash-house into a violin academy I shall never understand.

Huberman had a truly prodigious technique, but there were times when he positively thrashed his fiddle with the bow, to the ruin of the effect of the other attributes of his otherwise wonderful playing.

I was also associated with the once famous Bohemian String Quartet, as the result of an urgent appeal. Their viola player Nedbal, I was told, had been taken ill and I was called upon to play with them at the Æolian Hall and at a series of provincial concerts, practically without rehearsal. The works included Schubert's great D minor quartet, the finale of which the Bohemians played at a great pace, with sparkling rhythm and crystal-clear precision. Fortunately I had played it a good deal and was able to fall in with their ideas. After the tour I discovered that Nedbal—a fine player—had not, in point of fact, been ill. The reason for his disappearance was that he had run off with the first violinist's wife.

After years of this chopping and changing I found a more or less permanent home in a piano quartet in which my colleagues were Albert Sammons, Felix Salmond and William Murdoch. We called ourselves The Chamber Music Players, and we made music together for the best part of twenty-two years with but two changes (both cellists—Cedric Sharp and Lauri Kennedy). Some of the happiest hours of my life were spent with the good friends and good musicians. The Chamber Music Players worked hard, but now and then at rehearsals we let off steam with hilarious fooling in which Sammons, so full of wit and humour, was the ringleader. I have lost count of the times I have joined forces with Sammons in Mozart's *Concertante*—

every one of them a joy. What a natural, born violinist! If only our country had done its duty by him and given him in his early life the facilities he deserved he would, I feel, have been the greatest of all.

I learnt much about the finer points of chamber-music playing from associating with all these experienced artists, and formed conclusions as to the essentials which would provide a string-quartet combination able to give supreme performance in this, the most difficult branch of music-making. I hold that, if a high standard of playing is aimed at, the following is demanded: first, great executive powers, together with fine musicianship, on the part of each member; next, a close relation in tone-quality between the instruments themselves. This is more difficult than the layman would suppose, and still more difficult is the next essential: the players must agree; in fact their dispositions should possess saintly qualities. They must be at one in style and outlook. The way of perfection is beset with pitfalls. Not seldom has a fine combination broken up through petty quarrels. And one often hears an ensemble ruined by the lack of warmth in one or another of the members. The leader needs to be a master-musician and a virtuoso; he must have a mind of profound understanding and hands adequate to scores bristling with technical difficulties. Herein is a great obstacle in the way of perfection; for the violinists of this calibre are few who are ready to divide modest spoils into four equal parts. Let the listener who hears such a one realize that the violinist could do much better for himself, in the ordinary sense of the term, by solo

playing. A supremely fine quartet cannot, in the world we live in, exist without a subsidy. My mind goes back to the various combinations I have heard, and I give the palm to the Curtis String Quartet who, as I remember them at the Æolian Hall, touched the ideal. They were subsidized by the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia. They had all the attributes one could wish for.

How hard to come by is this team spirit! And yet, without it, all chamber music is vanity. Self-conceit and a sense of superiority on the part of any one of the members, and the spirit has fled. To the right frame of mind is to be added intense and incessant application. It is a hard road.

Among orchestral concerts that stand out in my memory are two in which the entire programme consisted of three major works for viola. One was in London some thirty years ago when, with that fine conductor, Eugène Goossens, I played Bloch's viola suite (then new), York Bowen's concerto and Dale's *Romance and Finale* The other was at Zurich, where the programme consisted of Mozart's *Symphonie Concertante, Harold in Italy* and Walton's concerto. Volkmar Andreæ conducted. In New York I once played two works in one programme with the New York Symphony Orchestra under Damrosch. One was Bach's unaccompanied *Chaconne.*

X

ANOTHER occasion, memorable for me, when I played the *Chaconne* was at Holkham in Norfolk. On one of the most fortunate days in my life I made the acquaintance of the late Earl of Leicester, whom it was my privilege to call my friend for more than half a lifetime. A privilege indeed! To be in Thomas Coke's company, to have the chance of appreciating his charming nature—this is something for thanksgiving. Many are the hours I have spent making music with him, and he was ever an inspiration to me. Lord Leicester was a born fiddler, and if he had had in his young days the opportunities he ought to have been given there is no saying where he would have arrived.

Holkham Hall is one of the most beautiful houses in the world, and the great hall—a Roman basilica in form — is as wonderful acoustically as it is architecturally. One evening Lord Leicester said: "Lionel, I should so like to hear the *Chaconne* in the hall—in the dark!" I never could refuse a request from him, so far as lay in my power. The lights were extinguished, and a singular experience was mine. I felt not that I was playing but that I was listening — listening with humble wonder to Bach's majestic music, as though I were not participating myself. The acoustics of the hall lent an incomparable sonority to the viola's tone.

A Norfolk neighbour was Lady Fermoy, a piano

pupil of Cortot's and, again, a born musician. Many times have I made music with her, to my intense enjoyment. She is one of those rare pianists who, seemingly by instinct, know what you are about to do in the way of nuance and tempo before you do yourself.

In the years 1922-1924 I paid two long visits to the United States. The first lasted for three months, with recitals and a number of concerts with Frances Alda, a well-known American singer.

On my return trip in 1922 Robert Mayer was a fellow-passenger, and in our talks together he bubbled with enthusiasm over some concerts he had attended of programmes for children, instituted by Walter Damrosch of New York. Soon there was a similar institution in London, and the movement has borne fruit in the form of today's much larger and more musically-minded public for orchestral music. One has only to look round the well-filled halls at London's innumerable orchestral concerts to realize the importance of Sir Robert and Lady Mayer's work. Malcolm Sargent was the life and soul of the Mayer Children's Concerts in the earlier years. His playing on the piano of extracts from the works to be performed and his vivacious commentary were the delight of all present—the young and the not so young.

The second American visit lasted for five months, and it was then I played Mozart's *Symphonie Concertante* in New York with Kreisler. After a second performance with him at Boston he filled full my cup by suggesting that we should repeat it in London, at the Royal Albert Hall. It was like a dream—a wild, impossible dream—come true. For

twenty years I had been slavishly devoted to him: I revered him as a god. And now I was to play with him in my own London! "Man never is, but always to be, blest," says the poet. He was unluckier than I, if he believed that. I have known happiness. When the Albert Hall concert came Kreisler insisted that I should go on the platform before him, and when I demurred he said: "You are my guest!"

In days when viola solos were virtually unknown the Americans welcomed the innovation more kindly than most people had done in the London of my young days. (But an exception in the London Press were the critics of *The Daily Telegraph,* beginning with that genial soul Robin Legge, who was followed by Herbert Hughes and Ferruccio Bonavia, and a little later by Richard Capell.)

In 1926 Dame Nellie Melba undertook a farewell tour of about twenty concerts, and invited me to play solos. When I accepted, she wrote to me from Venice:

> My dear Lionel, I am *dee*lighted that you will honour my farewell tour in England by playing for me. We must do the Mozart Aria. I wonder if you have a copy of my cadenza. I can't find mine (so like me). I return to England (for a few days) about the 17th September, so do ring me up, 5581 Mayfair, and we might have a little rehearsal and then you could give me the song.
>
> Bless you,
>
> Nellie Melba.

The Mozart aria—which was included in every programme—was 'L'amerò, sarò costante' from *Il Re pastore,* for soprano and violin. (I adapted the violin obligato for viola.) Her singing of this was divine: no more beautiful phrasing could be

imagined. Melba, that great artist, was also a generous and delightful woman.

Her singing was very nearly unique. She seems to have received as a natural gift what others strive for with toil and tears and never quite attain. She sang with a perfectly lovely and perfectly even scale, and the effect was of simplicity and ease, I believe it is true, as a matter of fact, that she did not have to work much in her training-time. Her intonation was always faultless, her phrasing was ideal. No singer I have ever heard could trill as she did. The two notes of her trill were dead in tune, and the utmost brilliancy was maintained for its duration. The *Re Pastore* aria included an elaborate cadenza with florid decorations and a chromatic scale rising an octave to the B flat above the treble stave, with the viola accompanying a third below. Her singing of this scale was always a miracle of exactitude. All her life writers strove to describe the quality of her tone, but this was beyond words. It would, at the same time, be a lack of candour not to admit that Melba condescended at times to sing music unworthy of her voice and art.

My wife came to all the concerts of the tour and often accompanied Melba on walks. Once Melba said to her: "People will remember me not by my singing but by what they eat!" Her term of endearment for my wife was "little grey Mousie". The last time she went to Australia she invited me to accompany her, to play at her concerts; but I loathed travelling and did not take advantage of her suggestion. On the voyage she contracted an illness from eating watercress that had not been properly washed, and she wrote a despairing letter

to my wife, saying: " . . . hard if I should have to die now—I have such a lot to do." She died in Australia in 1931.

XI

At the request of Sir John McEwen, Mackenzie's successor as Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, I undertook from 1924 to 1929 the direction of the ensemble classes there. Among the quartets I coached was one consisting of Phyllis MacDonald, Adna Ryerson, Winifred Copperwheat and Joan Mulholland. These delightful young students accomplished the feat of performing all Haydn's eighty-three quartets, giving a concert a week in 1927-28 with three quartets in each programme.

During my five years of chamber-music coaching at the R.A.M. I used to pick out the best string players with the purpose of constituting permanent teams. I chose for association players I thought would match in as many ways as possible and might in time make acceptable string-quartet combinations. One of these teams, to which I gave much time and care, cohered and in due course made a name for itself : everyone knows the Griller Quartet. Another, upon which I set high hopes, consisted of Jean Pougnet, Hugo Rignold, Harry Berly and Douglas Cameron. It was a sorrow to me that they did not stick together. Pougnet and Cameron have gone their several ways successfully, and the Canadian Rignold has won a place for himself as conductor — first at Covent Garden and then at Liverpool.

I did not confine myself at the Academy to questions of ensemble, but laid down the law on tone-production. Invariably my viola was out of its case at these lessons, and I demonstrated practically. I resigned with regret; but the fact was that absorption in these classes had begun to take toll of the hours due to my paramount object in life. In 1929, then, I left to concentrate upon solo work.

In 1930 I for the first time played Walton's concerto. This was at Liége, at the invitation of the International Society for Contemporary Music. A memory I particularly cherish of those crowded years is one of a performance (November 24, 1931) of Strauss's *Don Quixote* at Queen's Hall, under Henry Wood, with Pau Casals as the cellist. In the second part of the programme Casals played Haydn's concerto in D. Just before going to the platform he turned to me and said: "Pray for me!" Dear and great artist! One of the great privileges of that generation was to hear him in his prime. A grand soul is housed in that small body—a body so small that it has always been a wonder how easefully his left hand climbs over the range of the huge cello he generally plays on. What supremely distinguishes him is his consummate musical understanding, but his technique in itself is fascinating and above all, perhaps, the cunning with which he changes position on the long finger-board. A vice of ordinary cello-playing is an overdone *portamento*. Most players seem either not to mind it or not to be able to conceal its uncleanness. Casals's *portamento* is miraculously discreet, no matter what the width of the interval.

One work, however, in the cellist's repertory,

THE LATE EARL OF LEICESTER

(Inscribed) 'To Lionel from Tom.'

DAME NELLIE MELBA
(Inscribed) 'FOR LIONEL'

Brahms's first sonata, the E minor, baffled even Casals in one respect. With all his art he could not help making the cello growl and grumble in the final fugue; and the blame must be laid to Brahms's charge. Brahms misjudged the medium when he wrote the fugue at that low pitch. This is one reason why I took it on myself to arrange the sonata for viola. I heard Casals play the work in 1945 at Chelsea, with Gerald Moore as pianist. I happened to know that there had been time, on the eve of the concert, for no more than one skip through. Yet the ensemble was excellent. But then, Gerald Moore is astoundingly assimilative, as well as knowing intimately the string repertory—and every other repertory—in which the piano is concerned. I have made music with him countless times, and have always felt that he would be the only collaborator with whom I should feel perfectly safe in playing a work in public without rehearsal.

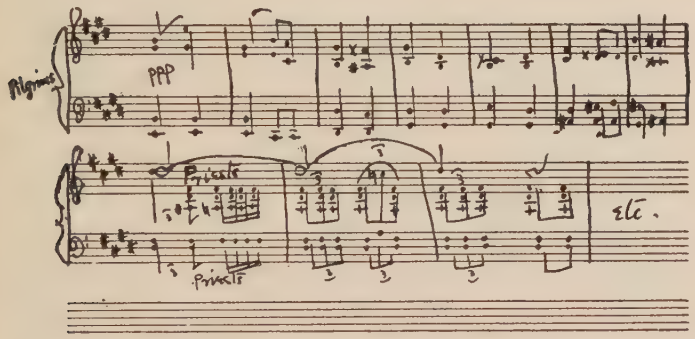
I had not seen Casals for years, and after the sonata at Chelsea I went behind to greet and pay homage to the great master. His first words to me were: "Have you played for the soldiers?"

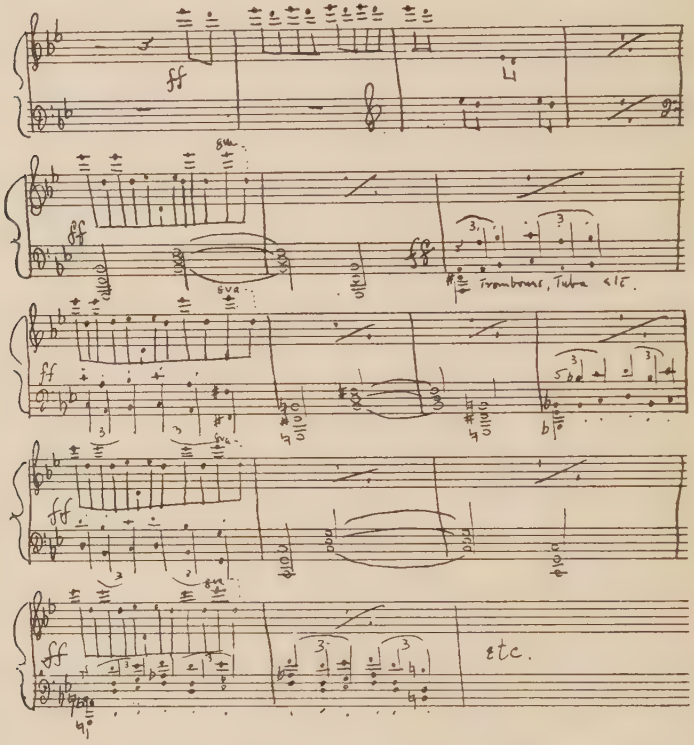
The reader, who by this time will have given up all hope of a consecutive narrative, must bear with me if I jump back to recall some experiences that began in 1913. Intermittently between 1913 and 1915 I took part in some of the most delightful chamber music-making imaginable. The scene was a cellar in Chelsea. The meetings lasted as a rule from midnight till daybreak. The audience were guests of an enthusiastic American music-lover, Muriel Draper. No public performances can ever have reached such a pitch of care-free, rapturous

inspiration. There were no rehearsals; the music came fresh; and the executants were no duffers—they included Ysayë, Casals, Thibaud, Harold Bauer, Cortot, Kochanski, Szymanowski, Arbos, Arthur Rubinstein and Albert Sammons. Mrs. Draper had built a basement room for music under her two houses (19 and 19a) in Edith Grove. We used to call it Mrs. Draper's cellar. Ysayë's word for it was "the cave". There were plenty of easy chairs; huge cushions were strewn on the floor. At intervals delicious food was forthcoming. Out of the innumerable works performed, ranging from duets to octets, one in particular stands out in my memory: Brahms's C minor piano quartet, played by Ysayë, Casals, Rubinstein and myself. Prodigious, the lusciousness and wealth of sound! Ysayë with his great volume of tone and glorious phrasing, Casals playing in the slow movement with divinely pure expression, Rubinstein with his demoniac command of the keyboard (his ferocity in the second movement was frightening)—what an experience for me to be associated with such giants!

I think it was in 1916 I enjoyed the excitement of playing at a concert with Ysayë and Vladimir de Pachmann, in Mozart's clarinet trio in E flat. Just before we went to the platform Pachmann put his arms round Ysayë and me—or as nearly round as they would go — and, in dulcet tones, with his beatific smile, said: "We tree . . . !"

XII

Of the Hallé concerts at Manchester at which I played, one (January 14, 1932) will always be memorable to me because of a performance of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy,* conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty. I have often played this grand work, but Harty's interpretation excelled that of all the conductors I have known. In two places in particular the effects he made were incomparable. In the lovely Evening Prayer of the Pilgrims, with the

answering intoning of the priests, Harty's expression was so vivid that one actually lived in the picture. Then in the final Orgy those outstanding bars for trombones and tuba, with clarinets and bassoons, heralded by the violins' fortissimo shriek —Harty rendered the grandeur of these phrases of immense sound with an extraordinarily subtle

rubato. What he produced out of these twenty-two bars was electrifying.

At Edinburgh in December 1932 I played in the first Scottish performance of Walton's concerto. Adrian Boult conducted. I was always happy under his baton, feeling I could indulge fancy in tempo and nuance with the assurance that he would be there. The applause was long sustained, and Boult amused me between recalls by whimsically suggesting that we should play the concerto all over again. We

returned to bow yet another time, and Boult flabbergasted me by addressing the audience and calmly announcing that in response to its appreciation Mr. Tertis had kindly consented to repeat the concerto. Let me say at once that the audience listened attentively to the second performance and nothing was thrown at me. It was a gruelling experience but worth having, for I am certainly the only viola-player who has played an entire concerto as an encore-piece.

XIII

OUTSTANDING among my Continental excursions was a trip I made in February 1933, which included recitals at Rome and Milan with Alfredo Casella, and one at Berlin, together with a visit to Delius at Grez-sur-Loing.

In Paris, speaking no French, I asked the hotel porter to get me a taxi to take me to Grez. I noticed that the driver looked at me curiously, shrugged his shoulders and eventually said: "Bien!" It was a horribly cold day, and snowing. After half-an-hour or so I became restless, but was unable to enquire how much farther we had to go. We pulled up at a station for more petrol, then on and on we drove. By now I was really anxious. Snow by this time was falling heavily, and I was shivering with cold. In vain I tried with violent gesticulation to find out how much longer the journey would be; my efforts were fruitless. The driver was the most impassive human being I have ever met. Then a horrible thought struck me: Should I have enough money to pay the fare? I grasped for my wallet—but I had left it with practically all my money at the hotel. By this time we were travelling slower in deep snow, and demoralization set in.

At Grez Mrs. Delius came to the rescue with the taxi fare and Eric Fenby explained that Delius lived forty-four miles from Paris. I should, of course, have gone by train. Once indoors my spirits

revived. The house was beautifully warm and I began to thaw.

Never to be forgotten was the sight of poor Delius, so wan, so ill, in his invalid's chair. He was blind; and though I was prepared for a frail man it was a shock to find him so near being a living skeleton. Withal he was charming—though I was told that this was not one of his better days. I had come to play to him my arrangement of his third violin sonata. Before the music we sat down to a warming meal at a refectory table, with Delius opposite me and Mrs. Delius and Fenby at either end. Delius was quite talkative—wanted to hear all the news I had and amused us with anecdotes. The time came for our music-making, and the poor man, swathed in rugs, had to be carried to an upstairs music-room. Fenby played the piano part of the sonata splendidly, and at the end of it Delius was quite happy about the arrangement—said he had enjoyed it and gave his consent to the publication of the sonata in this form. We played other things which interested him, before he was taken back to his room. I returned to Paris by train.

At the Berlin concert Mrs. Kreisler sat in the front row and Kreisler stood against the wall to hear me play one piece (he had to travel that night). The next day I was shown the Kreislers' collection of works of art at Grünewald. Back home, I found a letter from Mrs. Delius:

> Your letter with the money reached me quite safely and I am so grateful. I only hope you were not too tired. The remembrance of your masterly and heavenly playing, so full of deepest understanding, is with us all the time, and I hope you will come again when it is not so cold. Delius

would love that. It was unfortunate that he had had one of his bad days when you came, and he cannot bear such icy weather. Yet he loved and enjoyed your playing which, he says, is quite *unique*. Kindest regards from Fenby who, of course, loved accompanying you.

In 1934 I arranged Delius's double concerto (violin and cello) for violin and viola. I was fortunate in having May Harrison to play it with. The work had been written for and dedicated to her and her sister Beatrice, and she knew it inside out. The following letter from Mrs. Delius is about this concerto :

I have just come back to Grez, and I want to tell you that May Harrison, altho' she at first thought it would offend her sister if she played the double concerto with you, has now found that her sister is not at all against it. As you said you had no violinist yet, I venture to suggest that you take her. She studied it one whole winter, under Delius's own guidance, and he always thought her playing very beautiful and musical. It would also save you no end of trouble with a new violinist.

The first performance of my version was with May Harrison on November 14th, 1934, with the B.B.C. Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult.

Before this (on March 18, 1934) I had given the first performance of Gustav Holst's *Lyric Piece*, which he wrote for me. The following letter came from him after the performance.

Tuesday, St. Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, Hammersmith, W.6.

Dear Tertis, I send you my warmest thanks for the great treat you gave me and thousands of others on Sunday night. Your playing was perfect. I'm sorry I can't say the same about the piece itself. There is one bad bit of overscoring which makes me ask myself when am I going

to learn the elements of my job. This shall be put right before the next performance.

If you have any critical suggestions I'd be glad to know them. (The bad bit is, of course, the squiggles in four sharps.)

Yours ever, G.H.

In 1935 Dame Ethel Smyth asked me to edit her *Two French Folk-Melodies* which she had arranged for viola. In this connection my wife and I went to visit her at her house near Woking. In her sitting-room we could not help being struck with the accumulation of incongruous objects. One was a large and dilapidated kitchen-chair, with a huge rubber bed-ring upon it. An enormous, rough-haired, unkempt sheep-dog she introduced to us as her husband. Staying in the house was the golf champion Joyce Wetherhead. The years had not modified Ethel Smyth's famous boisterousness and brusqueness. She was a woman of extraordinary strength of mind and directness of speech. I recall a public meeting of a musical society at which a controversial subject was debated. Ethel Smyth came last, and she totally eclipsed all the other speakers by the force and clearheadedness of her statement of her views. Sometimes she was a trial to conductors. At a Queen's Hall rehearsal Henry Wood once exploded with the question: "Are you conducting this or am I"? At Covent Garden she was sitting in the auditorium for a rehearsal of *The Wreckers* and fussed Beecham to the point that he invited her to take the stick and show exactly what she wanted. Without a moment's hesitation, instead of taking the normal route to the orchestral pit she leapt over the barrier with skirts flying.

A 1935 concert that stands out in my memory was a B.B.C. recital with Arthur Rubinstein (in the then new concert room at Broadcasting House). Included in the programme was Arthur Bliss's sonata for viola and piano. Rubinstein arrived from the Continent only on the morning of the recital, and he had never seen Bliss's work. The crossing from the Hook had been rough—he had twice been thrown from his bunk. He turned up smiling all the same, and the moment he arrived we had the rehearsal and the usual balance-test. At the recital that evening he gave an astounding performance of the difficult piano part, making light of all its exactions. Rubinstein's technique is prodigious, and he is the most amazing of sight-readers. He is at his very best off the platform. Ask him to play anything—extracts from symphonies or operas, if you like—and his memory is ready with it. He is unapproachable in his playing of Spanish music—the bounding, joyous lilt he gives to such music is something which, once heard, is never forgotten.

At this B.B.C. concert I played Bach's *Chaconne;* and a few days later I received a copy of a letter Edwin Evans, then the critic of *The Daily Mail,* had written to the Oxford University Press:

> I heard Tertis play his arrangement of the *Chaconne,* and I am in favour of its being published. Not many viola players will be equal to playing it as he does, but they will all want to have a stab at it. As it becomes known it ought to be the equivalent of the *cordon bleu* among them. On the musical side it struck me, while listening, that in sonority it was a distinct improvement on the original, though I may be stoned for saying so! The chords and arpeggios spread across the strings gain much in dignity by starting from a deep foundation. Moreover, with violinists

I have always been conscious of a certain occasional scratchiness, which they complacently regard as inevitable but which, for my ears, mars the effect. With the mellower tone of the viola this becomes negligible. I was on the qui-vive for it on Friday and it never bothered me.

Another great pianist of the time was Sergei Rachmaninov, the master of such rhythm, such dexterity, such wealth of tone, delicacy and general artistry that he came near concealing the mechanical nature of the pianoforte. I told him I had arranged for viola the slow movement and scherzo of his cello sonata, and considered them an asset to the viola's repertory. When I ventured to say that I did not care for the last movement he replied: "I quite agree with you. It is very weak and I never play it myself."

In January 1936 I undertook a tour for the British Council, which included Prague, Budapest, Sofia, Cracow and Warsaw, with Clifford Curzon. I particularly enjoyed the Budapest recital for the acoustic qualities of the chamber-music hall were inspiringly good. The sounds seemed wafted away with so mellow a resonance, such clearness in *pianissimo* playing, and without the slightest echo in *fortissimo*. There were two massive stone pillars at the back of the platform; and in the auditorium were quite a number of similar pillars in the centre and at the sides. When I first saw them I was filled with dread. How could music possibly sound well with these obstructions! So much for our knowledge of the mysteries of acoustics.

The tour was interrupted; I was laid low with pneumonia — the result, I believe, of being embraced at Sofia. After playing Bach's *Chaconne,*

I was in the artists' room when a huge man with the biggest black beard I have ever seen came in, made a bear-like spring at me, and hugging me, kissed me on both cheeks. It was a kindly-meant way of congratulating me ; but the sequel—at least, I regard it as a sequel — was a cold which, at Bucharest, turned to pneumonia. Among other solo appearances that year was one at Zurich with the B.B.C. Orchestra.

XIV

In 1937 a cloud that had for some time threatened darkened over me. Little by little I had had to cut down my repertory because of a physical affliction — a form of Public Enemy No. 1, Rheumatism. In my case it was acute fibrositis in the bow-arm, which had for two years been depriving me of flexibility. The fear haunted me that, if I were to continue playing, I should deteriorate more and more and undo what I had accomplished on behalf of the viola. No need to go into my inner conflicts. Enough that I decided that the symphony concert on February 4, 1937, at which the B.B.C. had invited me to play in celebration of my sixtieth birthday, should be my swan-song. As for my feelings at the concert I will only say inadequately that grief and distress prevailed. After the last work in the programme in which I was concerned — *Harold in Italy* — some sort of nerve-storm overwhelmed me. Without staying for a word with Ernest Ansermet, who had conducted, I collected my viola and other belongings and fled from the hall.

Not for a long time did I get over this upheaval in my life, but at last I pulled myself together and tried to plan an existence which might still be of some use. For nearly thirty years my home had been at Smalldown, Belmont, Surrey. I felt I could not go on living there, saturated as the house

seemed to be with the sound of the viola; and my wife agreed with me that we should find a roof elsewhere. We settled for a time at Broadstairs.

I was touched by receiving two letters, one from the viola section of the B.B.C. Orchestra (together with a present) and the other from the principals of the other sections. The first was signed by:

BERNARD SHORE
PHILIP P. SAINTON
ERIC BRAY
ANNE WOLFE
MARY GLADDEN
NORMAN CARRELL
L. S. SOUTHWORTH
WINIFRED COPPERWHEAT
HUGH WYAND
PATIENCE LUCAS
G. H. KNOWLES
GWYNNE EDWARDS
MURIEL HART

The other letter ran:

> It was a great shock for us to read of your retirement after our concert together, which was for us, ignorant of the decision you already must have made, one of the finest concerts we have ever given with you. We feel proud that your last concert should have been shared with us, and we realize now that we have lost not only a great artist but a great friend.
>
> The signatories were:

PAUL BEARD
ARCHIE CAMDEN
ERNEST HALL
AMBROSE GAUNTLETT
E. W. HINCHCLIFF
SIDONIE GOOSSENS

I parted with my Montagnana viola, my beloved and most trusty servant. I had no further right to this glorious instrument. It went to my pupil Bernard Shore, whose devotion to the cause of the viola has always been a source of deep satisfaction to me. I bought this unique viola in Paris in 1924. It was my rule never to fail to visit the important violin dealers in the cities where I happened to be playing, and in Paris during this 1924 visit I found at the well-known dealers, Maucotel & Deschamps, a Montagnana viola which was eventually proved to

possess a truly wonderful tone. I took a chance in buying it, for it was shown to me in an unplayable condition, without bridge, strings or fingerboard. I was informed that the firm was busy repairing a Stradivarius as well as other instruments, and that it would be some months before they would be able to put the Montagnana in order. In other words, I could take it or leave it! I was tremendously attracted by the fine craftsmanship, lovely wood and varnish. I could not decide there and then, and I remember walking up and down the Rue de Rome with my wife for a good three hours, trying to make up my mind. Finally my wife, who always had more courage that I, persuaded me to take it. No case was available—it was such a large instrument, $17\frac{1}{8}$ inches—so my wife came to the rescue by wrapping it in her waterproof coat, and that is how it was taken across the English Channel. Incidentally we were not bothered by the Customs. This magnificent Montagnana, unique in fine quality of sound and most satisfying depth of C string tone, was of enormous assistance to my campaign for the viola during my possession of it from 1924 to 1937. I was always in terror lest one day somebody would abscond with it, and I thought of all sorts of expedients to preserve me from such a disaster. One such plan, when on tour, was to hide it under the bed in my hotel room. On one occasion, in my absentmindedness, I forgot all about it and motored quite forty miles on my way to my next engagement before I remembered I had left it under the bed. It was still there when I got back to the hotel a couple of hours later.

Another of my safeguards was a secret detach-

able plug I had fitted to the electrical system of my car, so that it could not be started, and I could leave my viola in the car when making a short call, feeling reasonably comfortable that the instrument was safe. On the very first day I had this fitted my wife and I had an appointment with our chiropodist at Sutton, Surrey, and after his tender attentions, into the car we got. I proceeded to start it up, but it refused to come to life. For an hour I tinkered, hands black and covered in grease, but it remained obdurate. It was a Wednesday afternoon, with all the local garage mechanics away for the half-day. Opposite the chiropodist's was a police station, and in desperation I implored them to help me. The constable who drove the police-van answered my request most politely and worked away at the car for a further half-hour, but all to no purpose. He then conceived the idea of bringing out the Black Maria, fixed a rope to our car and towed us to a garage. My wife and I ignominiously returned home in a taxi. At 3 a.m. I woke with a start, sprang out of bed like a shot out of a gun, and rushed to my waistcoat-pocket. There I found my secret plug innocently reclining.

I was touched, and also rather alarmed, to learn from a letter from my friends Albert Sammons, William Murdoch and Sir Robert Mayer that a dinner in my honour was to be given on June 13, 1937. There were about two hundred at this party at Pagani's. The reader will find a report of the speeches and of my reply in an appendix.

After all, my severance from the viola was not complete. Soon I found myself doing more teaching than ever. I went to London from Broadstairs

twice or thrice a week. I had no viola, and gave lessons without an instrument in my hand, having promised myself I would not play again. But the deprivation I felt as a teacher—the loss of not being able to demonstrate to my pupils—made me break my resolution. How could I come upon a viola? Any nondescript instrument would do. I went into Margate one day, and in an old furniture shop noticed a small fiddle which must have been a viola d'amore. Its tone was a wheeze, but its price was only £3, and for a while it served my purpose. Later my pupil Eric Coates lent me his viola and my interest began to revive. At this time I wrote a booklet called: *Beauty of Tone for String Players*, which was published by the Oxford University Press.

From the moment I decided to give up playing my mind found refuge in a project I had for many years wished to realize. This was to put into practical form my theories of a rightly designed viola. My opportunity came in December, 1937. I had got into touch with the violin-maker Arthur Richardson of Crediton, and our collaboration began. My wife and I went to live at Bath, to be nearer Crediton. The problems that faced Richardson and me, I described in a pamphlet circulated years later—on December 4, 1950, to be exact, at the Wigmore Hall, at a concert given "to call attention to the qualities of the 'Tertis Model' viola, with the generous assistance of William Primrose, Harry Danks, Winifred Copperwheat, Jacqueline Townshend, Hope Hambourg, Stanley Wootton, Ernest Lush and Kenneth Harding." The contents of this pamphlet will be found in an appendix.

While I was at Bath I renewed contact with Kreisler, who was playing at Bristol. Once more I was enthralled. In the interval I sought him out for a word, but before I could utter a syllable he exploded with wrath for my having "chucked up the sponge". He would not listen to a word about my afflicted arm, but insisted that I could get round the handicap somehow. He invited me to supper and, seeing that I had in my hand the proofs of *Beauty of Tone,* he wanted to read it. Later on he wrote to me an appreciation of my essay :

> It constitutes a very valuable contribution to the literature of our art. Based on years of study and proven beyond doubt by your own magnificent achievements, your observations will carry great weight with your colleagues and all students alike.

I have just (1952) come across a copy of *Beauty of Tone* which I gave to my wife in 1938, when we were living at Bath. Pinned on the front page is a little slip of paper on which she has written : "This copy very precious to me.—His wife." She died on November 3rd, 1951.

On March 28, 1938, I was the guest of honour of the London Musicians' Club. I took the opportunity to express my views on the conditions under which our orchestras work. My criticism was that they were overtaxed, with the result of mass-production instead of quality-production. This brought from Beecham a rather tart and, of course, witty reply. Our exchanges, published in *The Daily Telegraph,* went on for some time.

A few months later came an invitation from Beecham to join him as adjudicator in the selection of players for his orchestra, the London Philhar-

monic, and soon afterwards he suggested that I should attend his rehearsals and concerts to help him correct any faulty balance of tone, and also to edit his string parts. I set to work, concentrating on the achieving of unanimity in fingering and phrasing, especially in expressive passages.

This job of improving the expression in orchestral string-playing should be the business of the leaders of the string sections. But we live in an age of Woolworth music-making. There are probably not enough truly fine players to man more than one pre-eminent orchestra in England; and the leaders we have are without the leisure to tackle the all-important task I suggest. Mass-production is required to such an extent that soul and body cannot withstand the fatigue and demoralization. The consequence is that orchestral playing is nothing like what it might be. The down-hill progress is accelerated by a mushroom growth of orchestras, which has resulted in the association of a minority of the efficient with a majority of inefficient players.

When I undertook this unconventional job for Beecham I feared antagonism from the players, who might well consider me an interloper. But my admiration for him was so strong that I took the risk. I hold that expressive playing by a body of string-players in a melodic passage can be properly accomplished only if there is unanimity of fingering and unanimity in the choice of string or strings. Another sine-qua-non factor is the use of a judicious vibrato, one that is neither too fast nor—Heaven forbid!—too slow. Vital to the expressive use of the vibrato is that is should be continuous: there must be no break at the instant of changing

from one note to another or in the changing of position. The vibrato must continue until the very end of a given note, and must be carried on without interruption into the next. In other words: Never allow your fingers to go dead! Keep them incessantly alive! All the vitality you possess is wanted to endow with expressive animation the wooden object you hold under your chin or between your knees. I would doubly and trebly underline these recommendations, feeling as I do that in no orchestra, whether at home or abroad, is the expressive quality of the string-playing anything like what it might be.

I remember that, with a view to improving the expression in Beecham's viola section, at least, I suggested to Sir Thomas my taking on the members of the section individually and giving them hints on tone-production. Beecham's reply was characteristic: "My dear fellow, do what you like with them! *Boil* them, if you like!" I do not know that I was of much help to Sir Thomas — that extraordinary man of genius—but it was a great privilege and an enjoyable experience to be so closely associated with him for the best part of a year.

Here is a snapshot in which I am carrying out my duties at an orchestral rehearsal at the Royal Albert Hall (1938) with Kreisler playing Tchaikovsky's concerto and Beecham conducting. I am suggesting that at a certain point in the score the orchestra had been too loud, and that Kreisler should play up. Immediately Kreisler turned to me and said: "I agree," and then, quite meekly: "I will try—I will do my best."

XV

THE 1914 war had until the last moment seemed incredible to those brought up in 19th-century liberalism. Yet more incredible would it have seemed that a second horror would be our lot within less than a generation. In a heavy air, very different from that of 1914, came 1939. One dare not peer into the future. When I looked round to see what there was of use I could do, nothing occurred to me except to play the viola again. Thus it was that I went back on my 1937 resolution. I resumed practice, and in 1940 began my new chapter by giving five recitals in different cathedrals—the first with Percy Hull at Hereford for the Bomber Fund (collection, more than £100, including a gold watch and a bangle), the second at Gloucester with Herbert Sumsion, for Gloucester charities (£30), the third at Winchester with Harold Rhodes, for the homeless at Southampton (£44), the fourth at Exeter with Alfred Wilcock, for the Lord Mayor of London's Distress Fund (£50), and the fifth at York Minster with Sir Edward Bairstow (£53).

As a preliminary I had returned to the platform to give two recitals with William Murdoch (November 4 and 25), playing on a Richardson "Tertis model" viola — the first time this English viola had been heard in public. I also resumed broadcasting, on November 16, 1939. Among the letters I received was one from "Uncle Tobs" (Tobias Matthay).

Marley, November 21, '39.

My dear Lionel,

We heard you over the wireless the other day. It was as great as ever! And it was a great happiness to hear you again. The new instrument came through most effectively, too.

All love from

Tobias Matthay.

I reached the age of sixty-five at the end of 1941, and the B.B.C. gave me a broadcast celebration. Following this period, between 1941 and 1944, I once more became associated with that great pianist Solomon. The first time I had played with him was at Woodford, when he was a child—his feet barely reached the pedals. He played with me Dohnányi's difficult violin sonata, arranged for viola, quite astoundingly. Never shall I forget our association in later years. Our rehearsals were hours of striving to grasp the fullness of the composer's intentions, and we practised hard to achieve balance of tone. I shall live in enjoyment of those rehearsals to the end of my days. Solomon's control of the keyboard is absolute. He never makes a show of his wonderful technique, so extraordinarily consistent in its accuracy. No matter who the composer is he captures his idiom and portrays it with the deepest sincerity. The unique equality of touch of all his ten fingers makes for a peculiar beauty in his playing. In difficult passages played *pianissimo* he makes the piano sing as no one else I have heard has done. Time was when Sergei Rachmaninov represented my ideal as a pianist; but he has been eclipsed, in my opinion, by Solomon—for me the greatest of pianists—as technician and musician.

In 1944 my wife and I found ourselves at Malvern, my wife, alas, in a nursing home; and I played there for the hospital. In the audience was my friend Jane Parke, a fine pianist, and through her I met Winifred Barrows, the head of Lawnside, the famous girls' school at Malvern, and one of the ablest and most delightful of women. Innumerable are the successes of her Lawnsidians. The arts play a great part in the life of the school.

I went on making music and in 1946 gave a recital at Wigmore Hall for the purpose of providing the nucleus of a fund to found an annual prize for viola composition at the Royal Academy of Music. Some £200 came in. In this year I was awarded by the Worshipful Company of Musicians the Cobbett gold medal for my services to chamber music. All through the war years I had managed to conceal the shortcomings of my bow-arm. In the winter of 1946-7 fibrositis again made me desist from making music, but before long I was able to resume. The next happening of importance was a recital I gave at the Royal College of Music, with Ruth Fermoy and Max Rostal, in 1949, for the purpose of instituting composition prizes there. I was able to gather some £400.

Who is the artistic executant, no matter what his eminence, who is without nervousness when about to face an audience? There is none! Naturally the possesssion of great technical facility is a help; it supplies a measure of confidence unknown to the second-rater—but never to the point of entirely exorcizing nervousness. It eases the ordeal; but an ordeal the experience remains.

The amazing, almost incredible feats a great

virtuoso accomplishes belong only to the heaven-sent few, those, moreover, who have begun to play as young children of between five and seven years of age, who have been guided along the right paths by good teachers and who have rigorously specialized. My own experience was to begin to play the violin rather spasmodically at about the age of fourteen, when one's manual ligaments, and so on, are already too far developed and have become more or less intractable. To say nothing of the indifferent teachers with whom it was my lot to study! The result was that, before playing in public, it was necessary for me to practise until I was pretty well green in the face, in order to command a sort of fictitious reserve of facility to make up for my lack of natural technical ability. And the prospect of a public appearance—whether before an audience of two or two thousand, and whether I was playing but once a week or seven times—was a call upon every ounce of courage I possessed, like the prospect of undergoing a surgical operation. The moral of all this is: Begin young and specialize!

1949-51 were years of mingled encouragement and sorrow. Thomas William Coke, fourth Earl of Leicester, died on August 21, 1949. It was my privilege to play a melody he had loved at the funeral service at Holkham Church, and as I played I felt his spirit near. He was one of the most lovable of men, and his devotion to music was deep.

In the 1950 New Year Honours King George VI graciously appointed me "Commander of the Order of the British Empire, for services to music, particularly in relation to the viola." In October the executive committee of the Musicians' Benevolent

Fund informed me I was to receive the Kreisler Award of Merit, an honour beyond my dreams. But my wife became an invalid, and thenceforward my place was with her. She was more to me even than the viola. Six times since 1944 she had been torn from me to enter nursing-homes. In the waning of 1951 once more they parted her from me, never to return.

APPENDIX A

WORKS FOR VIOLA AND ORCHESTRA

PUBLISHED

BACH: Double Concerto in D minor. Arranged by L. T. for violin and viola (Hawkes).

ARNOLD BAX: Concerto in D minor (Murdoch).

FREDERICK DELIUS: Double Concerto. Arr. for violin and viola by L. T. (Augener).

T. F. DUNHILL: Triptych (Oxford University Press).

EDWARD ELGAR: Concerto in E minor. Arr. by L.T. (Novello).

HAYDN: Cello Concerto in D. Arr. L.T. (Hawkes).

HOLST: A Lyric Piece (Oxford University Press).

MOZART: Clarinet Concerto in A. Arr. L.T. (Chester).

W. H. REED: Rhapsody (Augener).

R. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Flos Campi (Oxford University Press). Suite (Oxford University Press).

WILLIAM WALTON: Concerto (Oxford University Press).

UNPUBLISHED

BACH: Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. Arr. by L.T. for two violas and orchestra. (Score and parts from L.T.)

STANLEY BATE: Concerto. (Score and parts from Stanley Bate.)

ARTHUR BENJAMIN: Romantic Fantasy for violin, viola and orchestra. (Score and parts at Hawkes.)

YORK BOWEN: Concerto. (Score and parts from York Bowen.)

B. J. DALE: Romance and Finale (Score and parts at R.A.M.)

J. B. McEWEN: Concerto.

R. H. WALTHEW: A Mosaic in Ten Pieces. (Score and parts from L.T.)

WALDO WARNER: Suite in D. (Score and parts from Mrs. Warner.)

WORKS FOR VIOLA AND PIANO

PUBLISHED

ARNOLD BAX: Legend (Murdoch). Sonata (Murdoch).

BEETHOVEN: Sonata in G minor, Op. 5, No. 2. Arr. by L.T. (Augener).

BEETHOVEN: Variations on a Theme by Mozart, Op. 66. Arr. by L.T. (Hawkes).

ARTHUR BLISS: Sonata (Oxford University Press).

YORK BOWEN: Sonatas in C minor and F. (Schott). Melodies for C string and G string (Swan).

BRAHMS: Sonata in E minor, Op. 38. Arr. by L.T. (Augener).

B. J. DALE: Suite (Novello). Phantasy (Schott).

DELIUS: Violin Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3. Arr. by L.T. Double Concerto (violin and cello). Cello part arr. for viola by L.T. (Augener).

BRAHMS: Clarinet Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2. Op. 120. Edited by L.T. (Augener).

T. F. DUNHILL: Triptych (Oxford University Press).

HANDEL: Sonata in F. Arr. by L.T. (Hawkes).

JOHN IRELAND: Cello Sonata. Arr. by L.T. (Augener).

MOZART: Clarinet Concerto. Arr. by L.T. (Chester).

CYRIL SCOTT: Fantasy (Schott).

WORKS FOR STRINGS

PUBLISHED

BEETHOVEN: Trio for three violas. Op. 87. Arr. L.T. (Bosworth). (Originally for two oboes and English horn.)

SEVCIK: Violin Studies. Arr. for viola by L.T. (Bosworth).

WORKS FOR VIOLA WITH PIANO, ETC.

UNPUBLISHED

All works in this list not otherwise annotated available from L.T.

BACH: Double Concerto in C minor. Second violin arr for viola by L.T.

YORK BOWEN: Phantasy for viola and piano; Romantic Poem for viola, harp and organ; Romance for viola and organ; Quartet for four violas. (Available from York Bowen.)

KENNETH HARDING: Concertante for four violas; Divertimento for four violas. (Available from Kenneth Harding.)

B. J. DALE: Sextet for six violas. (Score and parts at R.A.M.)

HENRY ECCLES: Cello Sonata in G minor. Arr. L.T.

CESAR FRANCK: Violin Sonata. Arr. by L.T.

GRIEG: Violin Sonata. Op. 45. Arr. by L.T.

JOHN IRELAND: Violin Sonata in A minor. Arr. L.T.

MARTINI: Violin Sonatas in D and E. Arr. by L.T.

MOZART: Andante for Two Violas (from violin and viola duet in B flat) ; Violin Sonata in A. Arr. L.T.

S. RACHMANINOV: Cello Sonata. Op. 19. Arr. L.T.

GUY ROPARTZ: Cello Sonata. Arr. L.T.

A number of small pieces I have arranged for viola and piano are published by Schott ; Universal Edition ; Boosey and Hawkes ; Chester ; Schirmer (New York) ; and Carisch (Milan).

APPENDIX B

MY PUPILS

Included among my pupils have been:

Winifred Copperwheat, Bernard Shore, Raymond Jeremy, Jacqueline Townshend and James Lockyer, all of whom have at one time or another been professors at the R.A.M.; Eric Coates, for some years Principal Viola of the Queen's Hall Orchestra; Rebecca Clarke; Lena Wood; Maurice Ward, for some years Principal Viola of the London Philharmonic Orchestra; Hope Hambourg; Paul Cropper, Principal Viola of the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra; Ian Ritchie, for some years Principal Viola of the London Symphony Orchestra; Harry Danks, Principal Viola of the B.B.C. Orchestra; Max Gilbert, Principal Viola of the Boyd Neel Orchestra; Gilbert Shufflebotham, Principal Viola of the Birmingham City Orchestra; and Sydney Errington of the Hallé Orchestra.

APPENDIX C

SPEECHES AT THE 1937 DINNER

EUGENE GOOSSENS, who made the first speech, said that he had come not to bury Tertis but to praise him. He recalled the early days when Benjamin Dale and York Bowen had composed works for him, and how, later, practically all the greatest English composers had followed this lead. He mentioned one of his earliest associations with Tertis ; when he conducted the concert at which the first performance of Bloch's Suite was given. He told how, on receiving the news of Tertis's retirement, all the troubles he had been experiencing of floods in Cincinnati, cancelled performances and so on paled into insignificance. He and Tertis had been friends for nearly thirty years and had been loyal to each other throughout, except on one occasion. This was when Tertis had done him the signal honour of asking him to write a work for him. He had made four attempts to compose the work, and when at last he had completed something which he thought might pass the test of musicians and critics he went through it again, and decided to tear it up. Now all he asked was to be allowed to write another work at last, and to be given the pleasure of hearing Tertis play it. With a tribute to a great man and a great artist, he begged Tertis to resume his career.

BERNARD SHORE, who followed, was proud to be a pupil and an intensive admirer of Tertis, but valued above all their great friendship. He wished

to acknowledge in public the great debt of gratitude he owed to Tertis. Many years ago the latter had promised, apparently quite lightly, that when he should retire he would give him the first offer of his instrument. In spite of offers far greater than he himself could hope to make, Tertis kept his word like a gentleman and had passed the instrument on to him. In addition, he had included his unique library of music. The speaker insisted that this was only being held in trust for Tertis, should he ever want to use it again, and "please Heaven, may that day come soon!" He remarked on the inspiration which all Tertis's pupils had gained from their visits to Smalldown, and how Tertis gave everything he knew to his pupils, holding nothing back. He was still the world's supreme viola player, as his final performance at Queen's Hall had shown. Like all great artists, he was never satisfied with his playing, and in this respect a great deal was due to Mrs. Tertis, who, at all hours of the day, might be called upon to give her opinion as to the most successful way of playing a certain passage. He paid a great tribute to her unswerving faith in her husband. He spoke of Tertis's early struggles against almost insuperable difficulties, and said that he had the right to be proud that so many great composers had written their finest works for him. His retirement was the brave step of a burning idealist. He hoped he would resume his teaching which he, from personal experience, knew to be even better now than ever. He wished Tertis "good luck and happiness; and if you will, play to us again!"

Dr. VAUGHAN WILLIAMS referred to the news of Tertis's retirement, due to his alleged

inability to play *spiccato*. "I don't even know what *spiccato* is", he added. He spoke of the letter he had written to Tertis, promising that all those who tried to write works for him would guarantee to include no *spiccato* bowing. He said that although one had to respect the decision of so great an artist, he was sure that Tertis's second best was good enough for us. He told the story of how, having written a few small pieces for Tertis, he invited him down to play them over. Unable to find an accompanist, he had to play himself. As though this were not bad enough, they found that his miserable piano was half a tone flat. Tertis tuned down, set to work and after following the accompanist right through, apologised for his own shortcomings. The golden tones, passionate utterances and wonderful phrasing would always remain in the memory of those who had heard him, and even those who had not would live richer lives because Tertis had played, perhaps even before they were born. A beautiful thing, once created, remained with us for ever, in spite of the follies of all times. Had he played on a desert island it would still have been always with us. He recalled the legend of King Arthur; how before he died, he swung the sword Excalibur thrice round his head before throwing it into the lake, to show how it should be used. "We know where Excalibur lies", he continued, "and how in the same legend Merlin prophesied that Arthur should come again to rule over his people. May this prove a true allegory!"

Sir THOMAS BEECHAM then spoke of the highly emotional and perfectly justifiable speeches that had been made on Tertis's retirement. He

wished to paint another picture of his recollections of Lionel, and to touch on another which had received less attention. He spoke as a conductor. It was impossible to realize what the viola section of an orchestra was like when he started as a very young man. Their reputation was even worse than that of horn players! They were the despair of conductors, the diversion of the audience and the perpetual exasperation of the Press, or at least of that section of the Press which knew what a viola was. This Cinderella branch of the orchestra was considered to be one of the necessary and unavoidable evils which had to be endured. Then this worker of miracles appeared on the scene. How he did it, no one knows; but the fact that the whole balance of the modern orchestra was rectified was due from A to Z to Tertis. He had heard the long and justified praise bestowed on him as a virtuoso; but when the history of music here and abroad came to be written, this saving of the orchestra's "distressed area" would be recognized as his greatest achievement. This was an imperishable contribution, by means of which he would be as well-known as Queen Victoria, Gladstone, Casanova and any other historical figure. You cannot, he said, discern anything of Tertis's personal life from the tranquil facade of his face. He had been a rowdy, uproarious young bounder, unequalled in Chicago or Cincinnati. He recalled their early exploits on the football field, in hotels and railway stations and, in particular, one occasion when in company with Waldo Warner and Warwick Evans he had left the train and proceeded to uncouple the engine, to the subsequent amazement of the officials. The

romantic side of his nature was a closed book to the present generation. He had wandered all over the world with his mysterious instrument, and knew every little town between London and Odessa. He had even played English music everywhere, but was still alive! And this was not all. He had once received a compliment which any musician might have envied. When he, in the company of Ethel Smyth, met Tertis one day, the famous English composer, after having stared at Tertis for some time, plucked at Beecham's sleeve and said: "That is the only man I have met in my life I should like to have married." When the time came to erect a monument to Tertis, he suggested that this remark should be inscribed thereon as a tribute to his charming and popular personality.

WILLIAM MURDOCH said that he wished to consider Tertis's career from another angle. The sudden and apparently irrevocable decision came as an even greater surprise to the members of the Chamber Music Players than to the public. Apart from saying that they might soon have to find another viola player, Tertis had given them no inkling of his retirement. Their combination had worked together for the best part of twenty-two years. During this time they had had three cellists; the other three members had worked steadfastly together all the time, but for a short interval. Sammons and he would feel the wrench, but hoped all was not over. He described the personal blow on hearing from Tertis; their joy of music-making so soon to cease. It was not easy to reconcile oneself to the loss of a companion; doubly difficult for a combination apparently as strong as the Rock of

Gibraltar. They would probably not continue, as Lauri Kennedy was going abroad, and it required too much courage to make a fresh start at this stage. He would never forget the hundreds of hours spent with Lionel, working and fooling. For they did fool, although this facet of Tertis's make-up was not so well-known. Serious musicians were not always serious, and many people would have been amazed, had they been present at one of their rehearsals, to see Tertis so hilarious that he couldn't play a note. Sammons was not only the leader but the ring-leader, and sins at rehearsal were due to him. Once some musical point appealed to their sense of humour anything might happen. He was glad to see Felix Salmond present. He had been Albert's easiest victim, the ignition jet of his inspiration. He had often seen Felix twisted thrice round his instrument, sobbing with laughter, while Lionel rapidly caught the infection. But in spite of all this Tertis was always a serious artist, and was guilty of no deviation from sincerity and idealism. Art was his life and completely filled it. He had a splendid sense of concentration. He had confessed to the speaker that the happiest moments of his life were those filled with the laughter and work of the Chamber Music Players. "This is true for us, as well as for him. If Lionel, in search of happiness, finds music once again a necessity, we and the public will welcome his return." He then called upon his colleagues present, Felix Salmond, Lauri Kennedy and Albert Sammons to rise and drink a toast to Lionel Tertis.

In such a state of nervousness was I at the thought that I should have to make a speech that I

ate hardly a morsel. I managed, however, to say what I wanted. Here are my words as reported in *The Daily Telegraph:*

> My advocacy of the viola was the result of accidental contact with the instrument about 44 years ago, when I at once realized its attractions and its undeserved neglect. It was at that time the Ugly Duckling—barely tolerated—and however inadequate my efforts have been, I do take deep satisfaction in the fact that I was one of those who helped to rescue it from its invidious position. Of course this could not have been accomplished had it not been for our composers, who have provided the most extensive and the world's best library of solo viola music, for which viola players will ever feel the most intense gratitude.
>
> Now I should like to make an explanation concerning the discontinuance of my work. I want to take this opportunity to try and remove a little scepticism which I know exists with regard to the cause of my retirement. I ask you all to believe me when I tell you that my resolution did not come about without good reason and mature thought.
>
> For some two years I have had to resort to subterfuge to cover up the deficiencies in my playing. My colleague, Albert Sammons, will bear me out how some 18 months ago, in desperation, I sent him an S.O.S., and confessed to him the failing in my bowing technique which had come upon me. He tried all the tricks of the trade to overcome my difficulties, but without avail—and like the good friend he has ever been to me, he kept my secret.
>
> The trouble rapidly reduced my repertory and the position became untenable. I ask you to accept this explanation of my action in retiring at the tender age of 60. I had quite hoped I was good enough for another five years, but I am sure you will agree with me that having preached the Gospel of the Viola for so many years, it was time to give up when I realized I could not entirely practise what I had preached. I found myself unable to give the viola my complete powers, such as they were, and my course became very clear. I felt I would rather renounce my calling than bring to it a hampered service.

I do not allow myself any pity. Indeed the pity would have been if I had gone on and made a mess of things. I alone know how little I have done. But I shall permit myself the joy of looking upon to-night's gathering as the seal of recognition of the viola as a solo instrument.

SOME OF THE TELEGRAMS THAT
WERE SENT TO THE DINNER TABLE

Berlin-Grünewald. 13th June, '37.
In spirit with you, dear friend, kindest greetings best wishes FRITZ KREISLER.

Ravello, Italy.
Much regret absence abroad prevents me attending dinner and adding personal tribute and gratitude to the genius of Lionel Tertis whose retirement we all so much deplore. WILLIAM WALTON.

Tremezzo, Italy.
Hope to hear you soon again best wishes, in full admiration. ARTHUR SCHNABEL.

Brighton.
My affectionate greetings to a great artist and profound regret unable to be with you. BARBIROLLI.

Gstaad.
Temoignez Tertis hommages admiratifs.
SZIGETI.

SOME OF THE LETTERS RECEIVED

Barcelona, 27 Juin 1937.

Mon cher et admiré Collègue,

Je vous adresse ce mot très en retard pour vous féliciter de l'hommage qui vous a été fait par vos amis, collègues et admirateurs.—J'aurais voulu être là en cette occasion pour vous exprimer avec eux des sentiments que nous éprouvons devant vous, pour l'homme et pour l'artiste Il n'y a que votre décision de vous rétirer du public qui nous fait de la peine à tous, parce que cela répresente pour notre art une perte irréparable.—Nous devons tous espérer que cet adieu n'empêchera votre retour, fusse-t-il en caractère d'exception et de temps en temps. Excuser mon retard, mais je vous prie de tenir en compte nos grandes préoccupations qui absorbent tous ici.

Votre dévoué, affectueux ami et collègue,

PAU CASALS.

R. Mayer, Esq.
3 St. Helens Place,
E.C.3. 12th June 1937.

The members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra wish me to convey through you to Mr. Lionel Tertis their best wishes to a great artist and appreciation for the brilliant work he has done for the viola and the art of music.

His generosity and encouragement to his fellow musicians will always be remembered.

Yours faithfully,
(for and on behalf of
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA LTD.)
G. C. REYNOLDS,
Manager.

THE ROYAL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

19 Berners Street, London, W.1.
June 11th, 1937.

The Royal Philharmonic Society remembers with gratitude the many fine performances of Lionel Tertis at its concerts.

THEODORE HOLLAND (Chairman)

APPENDIX D

*THE TERTIS MODEL VIOLA**

The design of the violas to which you are listening to-day has been conceived, first, as a result of the scarcity of violas and, secondly, because of the deficiencies of small and large violas still in circulation. These deficiencies have continually confronted me during my fifty-seven years of viola-playing. The small violas have insufficient air-space and therefore lack viola sonority. The large ones, with their cumbersome features, effectively prevent ease of manipulation. As my colleague William Primrose once pungently remarked with regard to the very large viola: "The viola is difficult enough without having to indulge in a wrestling match with it."

The many different sizes of violas in circulation make it difficult for a player to go from one instrument to another, as is possible with the more or less standardized violin, and it is this lack of standardization in the viola which we are trying to rectify and which has hitherto been an obstacle to its progress. Now that the viola has obtained and is consolidating its rightful place on the musical map, more than ever necessary is the provision of good instruments, of which there is a great scarcity the world over. There are nothing like enough for the growing army of efficient and discerning viola-players.

The "Tertis Model" we think will help to correct these shortages and defects. It is $16\frac{3}{4}$ inches long,

*An address delivered at Wigmore Hall by the author on December 4, 1950.

and this I consider to be the maximum length for playing under the chin and, at the same time, the minimum from which to hope for a really satisfactory sonority. In this model we have been fortunate in our arrangement of air-space; and also incorporated are other features, resulting from practical experience, which make it, for its size, easy to handle. The fact that since 1938 approximately a hundred and thirty of these violas have been made, mostly by eminent professional craftsmen, here and in other countries, and that the vast majority of these instruments are in the hands of professional viola-players, speaks for itself. The standardization of the viola for which we are striving, though as yet by no means achieved, is well on the way and, I think, will prove to have a most beneficent influence in furthering the cause of the viola.

I should like to pay tribute to the violin-maker Arthur Richardson. I am particularly indebted to him for the many experiments which he made towards realizing my theories with regard to the ideal viola from the player's point of view, and I venture to suggest our collaboration has not been in vain. Mr. Richardson enjoys the unique distinction of being the first man in the history of fiddle craftsmanship to have made nearly one hundred violas, to be precise, ninety-seven. I want also to thank Mr. C. Lovett Gill, eminent architect and amateur violin-maker, for his fine drawing of the design of this instrument. These drawings are in use in many parts of the globe. Mr. Gill has made seven of these violas, one of which you have heard to-day.

On my own behalf I should like to add that

neither in the viola nor the scheme have I any financial interest whatsoever. Not a few of my friends have accused me of being an altruistic duffer, in not accepting financial reward for my part in the development of this viola. But if I had, this would have sent up the price of the instrument; and we viola-players as a class have never been and, I fear, never will be particularly affluent. Further, I would not have my endeavours for the viola in this direction tainted with monetary gains. My satisfaction lies in the fact that I have helped to provide the present and future generation of viola-players with a fine-toned and manageable instrument.

From the very beginning of my campaign for the viola in 1896 I have found that anything, however slightly unorthodox, that tends towards progress has generally met with violent opposition, and I know that some craftsmen and violin-dealers resent the idea that a mere instrumentalist should dare to law down the law as to the design of the viola. But I have had much experience of being up against prejudice, and am impervious to pinpricks. I know that I am not a violin-maker, nor am I a scientist, nor do I understand the secrets of acoustics. But I say to violin-makers that I have kept my eyes and ears open for well over half-a-century and have put two and two together. In other words, the design is simply an amalgamation of all the good points in the many instruments I have seen, heard and played, plus anything that I have learned that makes for ease in manipulating the larger dimensions of the viola. As you will see from your programmes, there are eminent violin craftsmen in various countries who have welcomed my ideas and

who are making these violas.

There are two other matters I want to mention: first, my gratitude to my colleagues who have given their artistry for this demonstration; and I want specially to thank William Primrose for undertaking my job to-day. I am sure I am speaking on behalf of all viola-players when I say that we rejoice in the magnificent work he is doing for the cause of the viola through his wonderful playing. I conclude with the hope that to-day's demonstration will result in still wider publicity for this viola, which it is pleasant to feel has emanated from England.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS OF THE TERTIS MODEL VIOLA

TO VIOLIN MAKERS

THE TERTIS MODEL VIOLA has among other considerations been conceived with a view — vital to the player — of reducing weight wherever possible without affecting the longevity or stability of the instrument. Thought has also been very particularly directed towards making the instrument easy to handle. The appended full-size drawing of it is by the skilled hand of C. Lovett Gill, F.R.I.B.A., eminent in both architecture and as an amateur violin-maker. Over 100 of these violas have so far been made by the violin-maker Arthur Richardson of Crediton, Devon, England. In addition there are already at least 40 more made by master craftsmen in England, the U.S.A., South America, France, Australia, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, the addresses of whom will be found at the end of this specification. That professional viola players

both in England and abroad are clamouring for these instruments proves the success of its tonal qualities. In addition to the diagram I have appended and put into words and figures (in a "Table of Measurements") the make-up of my viola to emphasize the dimensions from scroll to tail-pin. With Lovett Gill's drawing in front of him and the "Table of Measurements" the luthier who *faithfully* follows them, can—given wood of good acoustic quality and adequate skill — *be sure* of producing a viola that will give the satisfactory quality and sonority for which this design of instrument is fast becoming known. In submitting this design to you I lay claim to the fact that the tonal success of my design is the result of a long lifetime of practical experience as a performer coupled with the fortunate circumstances of having struck the right proportions in air space and other considerations for this size of instrument ($16\frac{3}{4}$ in.) which I hold is the ideal size (and limit) for playing under the chin. If the design interests you to the extent of your making one of these instruments I appeal to you to allow your craftsmanship to *follow the details* of the instrument absolutely *meticulously* (except for the thicknesses of the plates which, of course, you, as a maker, will vary according to the quality of the wood you are working upon). It is not by chance that all these violas are without exception of fine tone-quality and sonority with a magnificently powerful C string. It is also not by chance that many of the principal violists in London, the Provinces, and abroad play upon them. I want to emphasize that I have never considered the notion of any financial gain by retaining any rights of the

design. My sole desire in circulating these drawings and specification is to further the cause of the viola for which I have been a propagandist for close upon sixty years. More and more string players are taking up the viola because of its distinct and lovely quality of tone and because of the growing demand for good Viola players, *but* the present and future generation *must* be provided with a good instrument on which they can express themselves, and the need is world-wide. I venture to guarantee that (provided you possess wood of good acoustic quality and adhere to my measurements) you will be rewarded with the result of your craftsmanship and incidentally help to make good this universal scarcity of fine violas—the only return I ask from you is the acknowledgement of my design on your label, by adding the words (Tertis Model) in small letters, and your loyalty, by not deviating from my dimension and positions of this proved successful instrument.

LIONEL TERTIS

DIMENSIONS AND POSITIONS OF THE 'TERTIS MODEL' VIOLA

PLATES

Thicknesses as shown on diagram.

Button is $\frac{1}{2}$″ (12.70 mm.).

The arching of plates to centre line, is $\frac{13}{16}$″ (21 mm.) and begins *immediately* from purfling, thus giving greater air space and more strength to plates.

Width of f holes $\frac{11}{32}$″ (8.73 mm.)

The longitudinal section of top plate should have its centre section rather flatter than the back plate.

RIBS

Width at lower bouts $1\frac{3}{4}$″ (44.45 mm.) tapering to $1\frac{1}{2}$″ (38.10 mm.) at top and should be a bare $\frac{1}{16}$″ (1.59 mm.) in thickness.

The ribs should be placed not more than $\frac{1}{16}$″ (1.59 mm.) back from edge of plates (this to ease the reaching of high positions).

The top and bottom blocks (use well-seasoned toughest pine) differ from usual shape, as shown on diagram. The grain of the blocks should run at right angles to length of instrument.

SOUND HOLES

('Stop')

The centre of the sound holes are 9″ (228.60 mm.) from top of front plate, at side of neck.

BASS BAR

The position (see under "Soundpost") and shape as shown on diagram and is $\frac{9}{32}$″ (7.14 mm.) in thickness and $\frac{17}{32}$″ (13.50 mm.) deep under bridge. The outside of Bar should be $1\frac{3}{32}$″ from centre line, taken at the nicks.

SCROLL AND PEGS

The design of scroll is shown on the diagram.

Length from top of scroll to beginning of nut, $4\frac{3}{4}$″ (120.65 mm.).

Inside width of peg box at top, $\frac{5}{8}$″ (15.88 mm.).

Inside width of peg box at nut end, $\frac{3}{4}$″ (19.05 mm.).

Sides of peg box, $\frac{5}{32}$″ (3.97 mm.).

Violin pegs recommended (less weight).

NECK

Width of neck at nut end, 1″ (25.40 mm.).

Width of neck at socket end $1\frac{5}{16}$″ (33.34 mm.).

The length of neck from nut to end of neck at socket $6\frac{7}{16}$″ (163.50 mm.).

The length of neck from edge of top plate to nut, $6\frac{1}{16}$″ (154 mm.).

Thickness of neck at nut end, $\frac{1}{2}$″ (12.70 mm.) without finger-board.

Thickness of neck at socket end $\frac{9}{16}$″ (14.29 mm.) without finger-board.

The height of neck above top plate at shoulder must not be lower or exceed $\frac{3}{8}$″ (9.53 mm.) above top plate. (Note how shoulder of neck is inswept to enable thumb to get well into neck thus giving more stretch to the hand for high positions). The projection of the button should be $\frac{1}{2}$″ (12.70 mm.) from the ribs and this dimension should continue along the shoulder of neck for $1\frac{1}{16}$″ (26.99 mm.) whence the insweep begins. Shoulder of neck is $\frac{15}{16}$″ (23.81 mm.) wide at button and $1\frac{1}{4}$″ (31.75 mm.) at top plate.

FINGERBOARD

Length of F.B., $12\frac{1}{4}$″ (311.15 mm.).

Width of F.B. at nut end, 1″ (25.40 mm.).

Width of F.B. at socket end, $1\frac{5}{16}$″ (33.34 mm.).

Width of F.B. at bridge end $1\frac{3}{4}$″ (44.45 mm.).

Thickness of F.B. $\frac{3}{16}$″ (4.77 mm.).

Height from top plate at bridge end, to top of F.B. :—

at C string = $\frac{23}{32}$″ (18.26 mm.).

,, G string = $\frac{29}{32}$″ (23.02 mm.).

,, D string = $\frac{15}{16}$″ (23.81 mm.).

,, A string = $\frac{27}{32}$″ (21.43 mm.).

(These measurements should be made on left side of strings with scroll pointing away from you).

Depth of nut at right and left ends = $\frac{1}{4}$″ (6.35 mm.).

Depth of nut at centre = $\frac{3}{8}$″ (9.53 mm.).

Spacing of string nitches on nut = $\frac{1}{4}$″ (6.35 mm.).

(The height of strings above F.B. *close* to nut should be no more than the thickness of a visiting card and should be a fairly tight fit under the A & D, but under

the G & C strings the card should be a distinctly *looser* fit.)

BRIDGE

Width between feet, $\frac{25}{32}$" (19.85 mm.).
Thickness at bottom, $\frac{7}{32}$" 5.56 mm.).
Thickness at top, $\frac{1}{16}$" (1.59 mm.).
Width at top, $2\frac{1}{16}$" (52.39 mm.).
Width at bottom, foot to foot (outside measurement) $1\frac{13}{16}$" (46.04 mm.).
Height from top plate to top of bridge at G string position must not exceed $1\frac{7}{16}$" (36.50 mm.).
Spacing of nitches $\frac{17}{32}$" (13.50 mm.).
Spacing of nitches over all, C to A, $1\frac{9}{16}$" (39.69 mm.).
String height (metal) from top of F.B. to *bottom* of strings at wide end of F.B.

C=$\frac{3}{16}$"	G=$\frac{3}{16}$"	D=$\frac{5}{32}$"	A=$\frac{1}{8}$"
(4.77 mm.)	(4.77 mm.)	(3.97 mm.)	(3.18 mm.)

Metal strings are essential for the viola.

SOUNDPOST

The diameter to be $\frac{9}{32}$" (7.14 mm.). Soundpost to be placed in the following position (more outside than usual practice) as shown on diagram.
String length (nut to inside of top of bridge $15\frac{3}{16}$" (385.77 mm.).
Method of testing position of Post. — A visiting card 3" × $1\frac{1}{2}$" (76.20 mm. × 38.10 mm.) provides a simple device. Slit card in halves along centre for 2" (50.80 mm.), then to obtain exact position of post, proceed as follows:—

Insert lower half of card into F holes until you touch sound post—the edge of the upper half should be exactly $\frac{1}{4}$" (6.35 mm.) from bridge foot.

For position of post *back* of the bridge:—

Insert lower end of card until upper half reaches foot of bridge, then bring lower half towards bridge until it touches the back of post, this should give you a space of $\frac{1}{2}$" (12.70 mm.) from back of bridge foot to end of card, back from bridge. (Important points to watch in making these adjustments are that the bridge stands in the *dead* centre of top plate opposite the

lower nicks in the sound holes and that the string length is exactly $15\frac{3}{16}$" (385.77 mm.) from nut to middle of top of bridge).

To test for correct position of bass bar:—

Insert lower half of card until you touch bass bar when upper half of card should be exactly $\frac{3}{16}$" (4.77 mm.) from left-bridge foot.

Exact conversion of inches into millimetres are given for influence in measurements.

NOTES

Millimeter measurements (or equivalents of thickness of Plate &c.

$\frac{1}{8}$" = 3.18 mm.		$\frac{9}{64}$" = 3.57 mm.	
$\frac{7}{64}$" = 2.77 mm.		$\frac{5}{32}$" = 3.97 mm.	
Length of body		$16\frac{3}{4}$"	= 425.45 mm.
Upper bout		$8\frac{3}{16}$"	= 207.97 mm.
Centre bout		$5\frac{3}{4}$"	= 146.05 mm.
Lower bout		$10\frac{9}{16}$"	= 268.29 mm.

Wood Sizes Required

Top Plate (Swiss Pine)		
Length	$17\frac{1}{2}$"	= 444.50 mm.
Width	$5\frac{1}{2}$"	= 139.70 mm.
Thickness	1"	= 25.40 mm.
Back (Maple)		
Length	18"	= 457.20 mm.
Width	$5\frac{1}{2}$"	= 139.70 mm.
Thickness	1"	= 25.40 mm.
Scroll Block (Maple—use well seasoned and *toughest* Maple).		
Length	12"	= 304.80 mm.
Depth	$2\frac{1}{2}$"	= 63.50 mm.
Width	2"	= 50.80 mm.

Middlemoor,
Tavistock,
Devon, England.

LIONEL TERTIS

August 1952

ADDRESSES OF SOME OF THE MAKERS OF THE TERTIS MODEL VIOLA

ARTHUR RICHARDSON,
Park Road, Crediton, Devon, England.
E. & P. VOIGT,
51 Monmouth St., Cambridge Circus, London, W.2.
LAWRENCE COCKER,
16 North Parade, Derby, England.
PIERRE VIDOUDEZ,
22 Rue de la Corraterie, Geneva, Switzerland.
M. VATELOT & SON,
11 bis rue Portalis (VIII) Paris, France.
KAREL VAVRA,
Korunni Trida 28, Prague, Czechoslovakia.
WILLIAM H. MOENNING, Jnr.
2039 Locust Street, Philadelphia 3, Pa., U.S.A.
GEORGE SCHLIEPS,
217-46, 54th Avenue, Bayside, New York, 67, U.S.A.
A. E. SMITH,
9-11 Hunter Street, Sydney, Australia.
EMILIO PETRAGLIA,
Rioja 1952, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
IGNACIO FLETA,
96 Calabria, Barcelona, Spain.

With intense gratification I pay thankful tribute to the many viola players who have taken up the torch I ventured to light and have carried on the campaign to establish the viola as a solo instrument. To mention only a few at home and in the United States of America there are: William Primrose, Bernard Shore, Frederick Riddle, Winifred Copperwheat and Harry Danks; and Samuel Lifshey (Philadelphia), William Linier, Miton Katins (New York), Joseph de Pasquale (Boston), Spinoza Paeff (Balitmore), Milton Preves (Chicago), and Odeen Patos (Tel Aviv, Israel).

L.T.

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